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MAUDE MAYNARD

VOL. I.

MAUDE MAYNARD

BY THE AUTHOR OF

'ALMOST FAULTLESS' 'A BOOK FOR GOVERNESSES'

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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TO
MY SISTER

IN REMEMBRANCE OF MANY KINDNESSES

you have been 59 years 54 Pickering - Dr 8 Feb. '60. Lark.

MAUDE MAYNARD.



CHAPTER I.

Wednesday, June 24.

My twentieth birthday! Dame Nature is a very freakish old lady. It is a trite saying that she delights in contradictions, but I think it has never been more verified than in the undeniable fact of my having been born in June. How did it happen that I came into the world when it is wealthy with beauty and sunshine? For I feel perfectly sure that somewhere or other I must have a mark upon me—a mark in some degree analogous to that which Cain bore. It is certain that I ought to have been born in November, when street-lamps have to be

substituted for sunshine, when people are running against each other, and when mistakes are constantly being made, big with disagreeable results.

Everyone but myself seems to have some special vocation ; I seem to have nothing to do but to act as a spur to people's wits, and sharpen them up to find excuses for my faults or misfortunes. I really cannot have any place of my own ; I am always either treading on somebody's toes or feeling that they are treading on mine. I have often gravely considered the question, and have never yet been able to find out for what I am destined.

I remember that papa said in his sermon last Sunday, that 'nothing was useless in God's creation ; everything had its specified work and appointed place in the grand design of the Universal and Beneficent Father.' I once ventured to ask papa where he thought my work lay, but I don't think I shall ever ask him again ; he spoke to me

for half-an-hour, and he actually prayed for me particularly that night at family prayer! He did not mention my name, certainly, but I am certain that all the household must have known whom he meant, for he prayed that 'one there present might be led to feel that before any work could be committed to the charge of a workman requisite power to perform that work must be obtained, and that this power often consisted in striving against evil habits and tempers, in checking the manifestations of ungodly dispositions and encouraging such frames of mind and dispositions of heart as would be acceptable in the sight of God and well-pleasing to our fellow-men.'

It was very wicked of me I know; but I did feel so angry! And I am afraid I looked it when we got up from prayer, for my cheeks burned and my fingers tingled. But it was too bad! for I *was* sincere, and I did want to do something; and if ever I do, I am always thrown back upon the old

advice of 'curing my evil tempers and keeping my sinful habits in check,' and striving for a 'meek and quiet spirit.' If papa had just prayed that Maude might see how wicked she was and what a bad temper she had, he could not have spoken more plainly than he did to my ears. I have never asked him if he could tell me my particular work again.

I believe I ought to be very thankful for being prayed for, but I cannot say that I am. What a comfort it is to be able to put down the honest truth and feel that no one will ever see one word of it! There are so few *people* that I really like, that I count this old red book one of my dearest friends,

And this just reminds me what a loss I have had. Dr. Vanny has gone away! He has gone to the Continent for complete rest and change. I have lost a dear friend for three months. How much I shall miss him! But, after all, I like places much better than people. I love to wander about our old church when there is not a creature in it. I

am afraid I do not like it half so well on Sundays—when I ought to like it the best, I suppose—when the multitude are ‘gathered together to worship in the house of the Lord,’ papa would say.

I sometimes lie on the soft grass and wonder what papa—the Rev. Dr. Maynard, with so many initials to his name that I never could for the life of me put them down in the right order ; when they are spread out they make a tail quite as grand as our old peacock’s—I sometimes wonder what Dr. Maynard would think, did he know that Madeleine, his youngest daughter, was—in fact, a heathen. Seriously and truly, I do not think I am one whit better in my religious belief than any of those poor creatures whom papa preaches for at the Missionary Anniversary, and whose condition he eloquently depicts in his sermon. I am glad that our Missionary Anniversary only comes once a year, for those sermons are an awful length, and I——

Thursday, June 25.

Why did I sit out yesterday so long writing? I cannot remember to think of the time; it does go in the most unaccountable manner when I am here alone. I resolve again and again that I will not be late, and then I forget all about it, until a look at my watch puts me into a cold perspiration.

Yesterday when I looked at my watch I found that it was a quarter before seven! Six o'clock is our tea hour, when we dine in the middle of the day (which we generally do when we are alone; it suits village matters better), and papa is punctual to the moment. I knew this, and I ought to have been in time. I really deserved that they should be angry with me, only it did not make me dread it the less. However, I made the best of it, and tried to put on a brave face and to appear the last thing I felt—unconcerned. Tea was quite over, and there was one cup standing severe and straight,

a speechless monitor, reproving me with silent sternness, and looking at me from the deep colours of the old china with eyes like Charlotte's own—and I can give no more awful description.

‘Just as usual, Maude,’ said papa, as I entered the room.

‘I am very sorry, papa,’ I began.

‘How is it that the whole family is to be kept waiting for you, Maude,’ continued papa, drawing out his watch—that grand old family heirloom, whose large proportions, coupled with the awe inspired by the diamond initials on the back, always sends such a shiver through me when drawn out in that singularly solemn and portentous manner; it makes me think of drawing a drowning body out of the water. I always shudder when papa's watch is drawn out in that way, for I know it is the prologue to a reprimand.

‘Kept waiting,’ I involuntarily repeated, glancing at the denuded teatable, which certainly gave no signs of a hungry family having

been kept waiting, 'why, you have all finished, I should think, nearly an hour ago.'

'It is a surprising thing to me, Maude,' said papa, laying down his magazine and restoring the watch to the profound depths of its abysmal retirement, 'it really is a surprising thing to me, that when you are in fault, instead of at once acknowledging it, you invariably begin to argue. I suppose you do not mean to tell me that you are *not* late.'

'Certainly not, papa; I know I am late, and I am very sorry for it. I only said I thought ——.'

'Then if you are late,' said papa, 'have at least the propriety to acknowledge your delinquency, and do not try to defend your faults instead of admitting them.'

Gypsie here made a diversion by rising and tumbling over a footstool. Dear little Gypsie! he always does such things exactly at the right moment. I sometimes look at him and wonder if he understands matters and where his intuition comes from, for Gypsie

never trips at the wrong moment. When he does upset his tea, or tread on Pontiff, or knock something down, it is invariably at the moment when I want an interruption ; he always gives me breathing time. On the present occasion his misfortune excited so much sympathy in the gentle breast of Aunt Gretta, that it occasioned a little sensation ; and when peace was restored by Gypsie being placed on Aunt Gretta's knee, with a gigantic piece of brown paper steeped in arnica, covering some infinitesimal bruise, supposed to be extremely painful, I improved the opportunity by slipping out of the room.

I was not hungry ; I did not want any tea ; I knew I was wrong in being late, but I was a very child, and did wish that they had remembered it was my birthday and adopted the good old custom of never finding fault on a birthday. But how silly ! I was twenty years old, and even when I was a child that had never been the custom with *me*.

Five minutes after, I heard Charlotte's

voice. 'Maude, you are to come down directly.' If they would but have left me alone! Papa looked up as I went into the room, and said gravely, 'Maude, I wish you could get the better of these tempers; depend upon it, my child, your own happiness is concerned as well as that of all around you.'

What could I say? I sat down and took my cup, but I could not eat; there were six plates, and they had all one piece left upon them, each piece bearing silent witness to my defection. If they had all been collected on one plate, they would not have looked so forbidding and relentless. All the time I sat at the table Charlotte watched me. I wonder if Mr. Retnor ever saw her look like that! I took down my tea at a gulp, and as I finished I saw Charlotte's eyes at the bottom of the cup!

As soon as I could I slipped out of the room again and ran upstairs, and was silly enough to let a few tears fall, which I wiped

away as quickly as possible, and, washing all traces of them away, hastened down again.

But papa was out, and did not return until nine o'clock, and Mr. Retnor came with him. I wanted to try to finish up the day well, but I cannot do right when Mr. Retnor is here. I never can talk without getting into trouble before that man—that gentleman I ought to say, for I suppose he is a gentleman, even if I cannot bear him. No, I really cannot endure him although he is papa's curate, so I find the best thing for me to do when he is here is to hold my peace. I suppose he is a very proper kind of clergyman, and his sermons are very correct ; only privately I feel quite sure that they are not his own ! and there must be something good about him, or papa would not have him for his curate, and Charlotte would not be intending to marry him, which I am sure she is. Money does seem to make things smooth and comfortable, I can't understand how, but I suppose that is because I have never known the want

of it. I have heard of people doing the most dreadful things to get money, so perhaps Mr. Retnor may venture on Charlotte. But then, as he is so rich himself, why does he want a wife with money? I wish he would preach some Sunday from the text, ' Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.'

Papa and he had been to a vestry meeting to decide upon the selection of a new schoolmaster. Mr. Morris is leaving; he has lost his wife and child, and he feels it so dreadfully that he cannot remain in Stonecross. Papa is very much annoyed at the inconvenience this matter has put him to; he has great pride in his schools; they are the best in the county, and noted for their large attendance and thorough efficiency.

He had not forgotten that I had been late to tea and what he considered my impatience of rebuke; there was a something in his manner which brought it all before me again.

We sat down to the supper-table ; papa repeated a blessing, and somehow brought in the words 'restraining grace,' which I noticed he much emphasised.

'It is Maude's birthday,' was Aunt Gretta's dear little feminine speech to Mr. Retnor.

'No, is it really ?' said that gentleman. 'So happy, Miss Maude, to drink your health and wish you many happy returns of the day.'

I did not doubt Mr. Retnor's happiness. I never do see him look so happy as when sitting down to a good supper or dinner. He poured out a glass of sparkling Moselle and quaffed it, looking at me all the time from above the glass.

'It would not be fair to enquire Miss Maude's age, I suppose,' he said ; 'young ladies are very particular about their age being known.'

'I am not at all particular, Mr. Retnor,' I said. 'I am twenty years old to-day.'

Charlotte gave me such a look ! I might have thought, if I had had any sense, that Charlotte, who was seven years older, must be twenty-seven, and she might not be particularly anxious for Mr. Retnor to be reminded of that fact. I sincerely hoped that he did not know there were seven years between us, but I am always unfortunate if I begin to talk.

Aunt Gretta's feminine treble was again heard.

'Yes, Maude is twenty to-day, and I should have made you a plum-pudding, Maude, for I like old customs to be kept up, only I am sure they are so bad for the digestion ; you feel their effects for long afterwards, especially if you take too much.'

'I should think you feel the effects of bread-and-butter, if you take too much,' said Charlotte, 'it would be strange if you did not.'

Aunt Gretta went on with unbroken placidity—'and so Mr. Retnor, I tell the

girls that as there are three of them, and as it is such a bad thing, I always make one pudding a year do for the three; and as Charlotte is the eldest, we have it on her birthday, that is the fifth of March; there are seven years between her and Maude, and I order one pudding between the three, because they are so very injurious; don't you think it better, Mr. Retnor?'

There is, not unfrequently, a slight want of lucidity and clearness in Aunt Gretta's explanations, and Mr. Retnor did not seem on the present occasion quite to understand. I am convinced in my own mind that he had been doing a little mental arithmetic, and had found that twenty, plus seven, required such an amount of calculation, that he had not returned to his normal state when Aunt Gretta concluded her sentence; consequently, he had nothing at hand wherewith to frame an answer. He is not a person of particularly ready wit, rather he is one of prompt action; so he poured himself out another glass of

Moselle instead of replying, and Aunt Gretta is too much accustomed for her questions to remain unanswered to notice it.

‘What have you settled to-night at the meeting, papa?’ Charlotte asked.

‘The matter is not quite settled, my dear,’ said papa, ‘but I think our decision will ultimately fall on a Mr. Farren; circumstances seem to point that way; his testimonials are high and his efficiency seems to be an ascertained fact; but it is an extremely annoying business altogether. I cannot but think Mr. Morris to have been greatly deficient in a due consideration of our convenience.’

‘He could not help his wife dying, papa,’ I said.

Papa stopped in his occupation of cutting Mr. Retnor a second supply of rolled beef, and looked at me.

‘I was not aware that I said he could, Maude,’ he replied, in a quiet, deliberate manner.

‘Oh no,’ I said, ‘of course not—only——’

‘You may be sure Maude has some reason for being different to everyone else; she always has such good reasons for all she says,’ said Charlotte.

‘I believe I made no remark about the man’s wife dying,’ continued papa; ‘Mr. Morris puts us to much inconvenience by sending in his resignation.’

‘A great simpleton he,’ said Mr. Retnor, speaking with his mouth full. ‘A man with a good house and garden and numbers of things found, and a hundred and thirty a year. I should like to know what he wanted more! But they are all alike! this class of men never know when they have enough.’

‘Did he say he wanted anything more?’ my unlucky tongue asked.

‘Why, what is he leaving for, then?’ asked Mr. Retnor.

‘Don’t you understand, Mr. Retnor, that he is leaving because his wife is dead?’

Of course he did not understand! How silly I was to ask such a question! Can a

blind man see the beauty of the earth, or the glory of the sky? Mr. Retnor could not understand.

‘All nonsense,’ he said; ‘what an absurdity! There’s something he wants and can’t get, so he must leave; he might have pitched upon a better excuse than the one he has given; it’s so absurd everyone must see through it. He is discontented about something. If he had any sense he would look out for another wife instead of making so much fuss about the old one. Would he not, Miss Maynard?’

Charlotte laughed—a short, hard laugh, and I mused upon Mr. Retnor’s coarseness and vulgarity until he began again in a loud tone—

‘For my part, I cannot say that I am sorry Mr. Morris is going. I don’t think that he was as efficient as he seemed. I have noticed scores and scores of things in those schools which needed altering. I could have put them right in no time, but Mr.

Morris always had some reason or other for not doing it, and seemed actually to think that he knew as well as other people.'

'Perhaps he did,' I could not help saying.

I was very sorry the moment after when I saw how papa looked at me ; and for the third time I resolved that I would not speak unless spoken to.

Mr. Retnor went on :—' I saw Morris one day arguing with a lad,—no end of jargon. He told me afterwards that he was trying to appeal to his better feelings, his moral sense, his conscience. I would have appealed to a quicker sense than that ! I would have laid the cane over his back in no time and seen what he thought of it. Such waste of time when he ought to have been teaching ! That is what he is paid for.'

Again I could not help speaking. 'Perhaps,' I said, ' Mr. Morris thought that the very best way of teaching—appealing to the boy's higher nature, rather than hardening him by physical compulsion.'

Oh, that old Dame Nature! Why *did* she give me a tongue that never will be still when it ought to? To see the look Charlotte gave me, and papa! I think Mr. Retnor went rather red; I am glad he can blush.

‘You understand so much about these things, my dear,’ said papa (if he only would not say ‘my dear’ when he is angry!) ‘that your opinion no doubt is very valuable, but perhaps it might be as becoming to keep it until it is asked for, especially about a matter in which you have no interest. We are told that “he that hath knowledge spareth his words,” and that “even a fool when he holdeth his peace is counted wise.”’

I did not reply, no—I did not, though I burned to speak; for have I not a great interest in the schools? Do not all the children know me, and, I hope, love me a little? I am always happy with them, and they are always ready to run errands for me, and are constantly on the look-out to bring me flowers or fruit or any little thing they can. And

they will stop in a moment doing anything wrong if I wish them. I have put an end to many a fight, and coaxed many a combatant into good humour, for in our rambles Gypsie and I are constantly coming upon groups of boys, engaged in all kinds of pursuits, lawful and unlawful. It really was rather too bad of papa to say that I had no interest in the schools.

Mr. Retnor was not offended ; with all his disagreeableness he really is good-natured. He only helped himself to another glass of wine, and exclaimed, in his usual rough way, ‘ Well done, Miss Maude ! Catch me arguing with a boy for half-an-hour. No ; make them do it, say I, and if they don’t, lay the stick on them. I hope this new schoolmaster will be one of the right sort, and if he is not, I must put him up to a thing or two. What a simpleton Mr. Morris is to give up this place because his wife has died ! ’

‘ Poor thing ! ’ sighed Aunt Gretta, ‘ I always felt sure she would die.’

‘ So did we all,’ said Charlotte. ‘ What a mark of special acuteness, Aunt Gretta, to be sure that a woman will die !’

‘ I mean, my dear,’ said Aunt Gretta, ‘ I mean when I used to see her, as I did, walking out in all weathers, and, I believe, in very thin boots ; one or two days I have seen her pass the shrubbery gates when I am sure, with her lungs, she would have been much better in bed.’

‘ You and Maggie seem to be of one opinion about bed,’ said Charlotte.

‘ And I spoke to her once or twice,’ continued Aunt Gretta, ‘ and recommended her to go in and have some gruel, but she never seemed to think anything of it. Poor thing ! if she had attended to my suggestions she, most likely, would have been alive now.’

‘ It is an extraordinary thing to me,’ said papa, ‘ an extraordinary thing, to see how little attention is paid, even in the enlightened times in which we live, and by intelligent men such as Mr. Morris, to the most ordinary

sanitary laws. Really, it does argue an amount of carelessness and obtuseness which you would scarcely believe possible. Men—reading, thoughtful men, artisans, mechanics, the better class of labourers, and even school-masters, who, from their very position you would imagine must necessarily be well-informed on these points—neglect the most obvious and simple laws of hygiene. Drainage, fresh air, pure water, attention to diet, the maintenance of regular habits, suitable food, all appear matters of no moment. A child might perceive these to be palpably essential; surely, a man ought to need no urging to attend to them. They are indeed slow to understand that “wisdom is the principal thing.”’

‘But all these things take up so much time and attention,’ said Maggie; ‘people cannot be troubled.’

‘Cannot be troubled! Maggie,’ said papa, ‘I regret to hear such a sentiment from your lips. “Cannot be troubled” to use those

means which a beneficent and wise Creator has placed in our hands for our good, and the disregard of which must inevitably unfit us for the discharge of our duties !'

Maggie yawned. The exertion of listening to such a long speech had evidently distressed her, and Aunt Gretta immediately suggested the propriety of her going to bed, which proposition Maggie instantly negatived. Disagreeable as Mr. Retnor is, I do believe that both my sisters like him to be here in the evening. Mr. Retnor is simply intolerable to me, but then I know I am out of tune with everybody. I am bitter. No wonder I should dislike Mr. Retnor. Perhaps he is not so bad, after all.

'Educate them, sir, educate them,' he said in reply to papa's last speech. 'We must get a man, not like Mr. Morris, but a man who will drive sense into them *nolens volens*. Make them, say I; I have no notion of "moral suasion" with lubber-headed school-boys.'

We had finished supper, and they gathered round the fire. I took some work, and kept away at a safe distance at the other end of the room. I thought I should not be tempted to speak then.

No matter how hot the day has been, Aunt Gretta will have a fire in the evenings. Sometimes it is very pleasant, for often the evenings are chilly; sometimes it is overpowering; but then who would think of contradicting good, kind Aunt Gretta's whims? I am sure I would not if I fainted with the heat. I am so thankful that I feel kindly towards someone; it is one of my last bits of hope, one of the vestiges of a lingering humanity still clinging about my soured heart. I am capable of some kindly feelings, and I hail the existence of these as a miser would treasure some remnant of property of which he felt himself being gradually robbed. Perhaps Aunt Gretta is weak, but she is kind; and if kindness be weakness, let it be.

They sat round the fire, papa, upright

and dignified even by the influence of a crisping, curling, crackling fire; Maggie, almost at full length in the large arm-chair; Aunt Gretta knitting; and Charlotte, at Mr. Retnor's side, sewing a coarse blue flannel-petticoat. How can she do such work for him to see! There now! ill-natured again! But she always brings out the most conspicuous work for the poor when Mr. Retnor is with us. Mr. Retnor is an essentially practical man; his redeeming point is his power of working. I never see that blue flannel-petticoat but when he is here. Now, if Charlotte really likes him, I wonder she is not dreadfully afraid of even appearing to do anything that he might notice, and possibly guess her motive. Charlotte sewed at the petticoat, and Mr. Retnor sat by and thundered out his set of stated opinions.

‘There are a great many things want altering in the mode of conducting that senior boys’ school,’ he said.

‘Are there, indeed?’ said papa, with some

slight dignity; 'I confess they have escaped my observation.'

The dignity was thrown away upon Mr. Retnor.

'Yes,' he said; 'I have made notes of them, and I will undertake to see my views carried out when the new master comes.'

Papa slightly coughed. He was always extremely careful never to differ from any of his curates before us. I don't think he liked the tone of Mr. Retnor's last remark, but he only said :—

'I conceive, if we get a suitable man, any points which require special attention will be attended to by him.'

'I will superintend him and see to that matter,' said Mr. Retnor.

Papa coughed again. 'I have always held,' he remarked, 'that when we deem a man efficient to fill the post for which we select him, it is well not to interfere. The secret of good government I hold to be, having competent people, and testing the

worker's competency by results. Too much supervision and interference would, I imagine, imply a doubt of the worker's efficiency, which ought to be above a doubt, until proved to the contrary.'

'Ought to be, my dear sir, but when is it? The only way to have things done at all well is by looking after them yourself; no subordinate is to be trusted.'

'Again I must differ from you,' said papa. 'You would cripple a man's power by constant supervision, induce a distrust of his own resources, and thus materially weaken him. Men, who ought, by failures and successes, by observation and experience, to become efficient and capable, would be reduced to merely mechanical workers. You call forth a man's best powers only by trusting him. We do not wish our workers to become machines.'

'They can only work under direction,' said Mr. Retnor; 'in fact, just carry out

orders. If you leave things to them, they are sure to go wrong.'

'I grant you,' returned papa, 'that matters often will go wrong, but to act upon the system you advocate would, in fact, make our workers slaves, and institute a race of dependent, inefficient men ; whereas what we strive to produce is a self-reliant, independent one ; and this is only to be done by throwing men on their own resources, giving them the training—the only valuable training—of circumstances and experience, but especially of failures.'

'But we are not to be inconvenienced by men's failures, when, if they acted under our directions, they would not commit them,' said Mr. Retnor.

'I think,' said papa, 'that we must all submit at times to be inconvenienced by the failures of our fellow-workmen. Such things must arise, and will of necessity always do so. We must take the failures along with the successes ; we reap equal advantage from

both, if they produce the result which I apprehend they do; other men's failures teach and enrich us, if we are willing to learn from them; and we must ever continue learning in this great school of human endeavour. If all the clumsy scholars be expelled, how many will remain? It is something, Mr. Retnor, to learn to bear with the errors of others, even as our errors are borne with. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Mr. Retnor was silenced for a little time; and I thought I had never seen papa look so nice. I longed to go to him and tell him how much I admired and loved him, but he would have thought me so foolish and weak. Once or twice I have tried, and he has always told me to avoid extremes, and to be on my guard against 'injudicious expressions of weak feelings.' So I resolved last time when I was tingling all over with shame and confusion at having made myself foolish never to go to him again and tell him what I

felt, but only to admire him at a distance. But I do sometimes wonder, when papa can talk so well on great subjects, that it never strikes him to apply such principles to everyday matters—little matters, perhaps, he considers them, but I have often heard him say in sermons that ‘nothing is little ; that little things are the small pivots on which great wheels turn ; that the smallest circumstance is a link in the great connecting chain, which would fall to the ground were that one link snapped.’ Can’t he apply his grand principles to me? Well, well, I can’t quite understand it, only I know I like to hear papa talk so nicely ; but I wish he would not only talk as far as I am concerned. Now, if I were his schoolmaster, or a boy or girl in one of his schools, he would see directly how to apply his views ; but his own child ! I suppose that is a different matter.

Mr. Retnor stopped the conversation by asking Maggie to play. Now, if there is one thing Maggie excels in, it certainly is

music. How she manages I don't know, for she never takes the trouble to practise. It seems to come to her like an instinct. Beethoven's Sonatas, Mozart's Masses, Handel's Symphonies, Mendelssohn's Thoughts—all come alike to Maggie ; it is the only thing she does thoroughly except flirting. Mr. Retnor tried to coax Maggie to the piano. The great trouble is to get her there ; when once she begins she goes on, but it is such a piece of work to get her to begin !

‘ Miss Margaret,’ he said, with a smile, which I suppose he meant to be persuading and winning—it made his face look exactly like that wide-mouthed cherub with the dumpy shoulders and flattened wings opposite our pew in church—‘ Miss Margaret, do favour us.’

I believe Maggie was more than half asleep, for, loud as Mr. Retnor's voice was, it only had the effect of making her start and rub her eyes, and look at him without speaking.

‘Do allow me to persuade you, Miss Margaret.’

‘What to do?’ said Maggie, looking rather alarmed. ‘I do not understand.’

‘How can you understand, when you are more than half asleep?’ said Charlotte.

‘I wasn’t more than half asleep,’ was the reply. ‘Don’t be disagreeable, Charlotte.’

This is the extreme of expostulation upon which Maggie ever ventures with Charlotte; she never gets any further, and this is made with great effort.

Mr. Retnor again preferred his request. Maggie looked hopelessly at the piano, and her courage seemed to wane. ‘I wonder,’ she said, ‘why we can’t have the piano nearer the—the fire.’

‘Nearer the arm-chair, you mean,’ said Charlotte.

‘Pray, allow me,’ said Mr. Retnor, offering his arm; ‘it will be such a pleasure.’

Of course Mr. Retnor must always speak the exact truth, as he is a clergyman; but it

is one of the small mysteries of life to me how he can say it gives him pleasure to have Maggie take his arm, and I hear him say so every time he offers it, and he is always doing so when he is here, for it seems impossible to get Maggie about the room without help, and to Mr. Retnor's active habits, the easiest way to manage is to give her his arm and *make* her come along: but how he can say it is a pleasure! Maggie weighs twelve stones now, and she is getting stouter every day, and she leans her whole weight on anyone's arm; and to say that is a pleasure! She will sometimes have mine, and, oh dear! I would far rather carry Gypsie for an hour than have Maggie take hold of my arm for five minutes.

She looked at Mr. Retnor's arm and seemed about to make some other excuse, but papa said, 'Be so good, my dear, as to comply with Mr. Retnor's request; all our gifts were bestowed by a beneficent Creator, and should, if possible, be used for the benefit

and happiness of our fellow-creatures. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much."'

Maggie got up with some difficulty, but having accomplished this feat, Mr. Retnor managed to steer her across the room and place her in safety on the music-stool. I will try and remember to-morrow to put a strong chair in the place of that music-stool; it creaks so tremendously whenever Maggie sits down upon it that I am certain she will break it into splinters some day. Having once begun to play, the great difficulty was over, and she performed in first-rate style; Mr. Retnor, with his usual effrontery and bad taste, taking the opportunity to talk to me.

Now, if there is one thing more than another in little social matters which I consider a mark of bad breeding, it is for anyone to ask a lady to play, and then talk whilst she does it.

'You are very quiet, Miss Maude,' he said, with a patronising, air after he had

talked for five minutes without getting anything but monosyllables in reply.

‘I wish you would be,’ I thought, but did not, no, I did not say it. How thankful I am that I did not, for on raising my eyes I saw papa watching me from the other side of the room.

‘Yes,’ I said, ‘I have a great dislike to talking whilst any music is going on.’

‘But the music has only just begun,’ he said ; ‘so I conclude you mean the music of our voices, to which you have been listening at a distance.’

‘I heard papa’s voice,’ I said ; ‘I did not notice anyone’s else.’

It was quite true. I did not notice anyone’s else, for no one’s else was worth noticing.

‘Now, that is too bad,’ he said, with a grin ; ‘I really don’t believe you.’

‘You can do as you like,’ I said.

‘Maude,’ said papa’s voice, and it sounded as if it came across a river on a foggy night,

‘perhaps what you have to say will do after your sister has finished playing.’

‘Oh no,’ said Charlotte; ‘Maude’s remarks are so valuable they must be given at the moment.’

Mr. Retnor only moved to turn over the leaf of Maggie’s music and left me exposed to the fire of Charlotte’s and papa’s eyes, which I was indignant enough to return with as broad and unflinching a stare as I could. I only hope I did not *glare* as well as stare. Charlotte has often told me I *glared*. But it is too bad to pull me up in this way before a visitor! I don’t care a straw for Mr. Retnor, but it would have been just the same had it been anyone else, for whom I did care.

After Maggie had finished, and Mr. Retnor had assured her it was finer than anything he had ever listened to, he turned to me and asked me if I would sing. I flatly refused. To have him ask me, would have made me refuse. Mr. Retnor appealed to papa; he is a mean, unkind man! ‘Dr. May-

nard, do persuade Miss Maude to sing one of my favourite songs ; she does sing so sweetly !’

‘ I should be happy to see Maude willing to forego her own wishes in order to give pleasure to others,’ said papa, with such a deep sigh that it indicated that he considered this a happiness unattainable in this world.

‘ If Maude has a sore throat, Charlotte,’ said Aunt Gretta, suddenly awaking from a nap, ‘ she had much better not sing.’

‘ Who said anything about a sore throat ? ’ snapped Charlotte.

‘ I thought you said, my dear,’ began Aunt Gretta.

‘ Then you were mistaken,’ said Charlotte, decidedly.

‘ I request Maude that you will oblige Mr. Retnor at once,’ said papa ; ‘ and remember that whatever we do, we are enjoined to do it “ heartily.” ’

Of course I obeyed. My voice trembled

so much that I could scarcely get out a distinct note. I am afraid papa thought that it was anger which made it tremble. It was the effort to keep back hot tears. Well, well ! The ten o'clock bell rang just after for prayers, and Mr. Retnor took his leave.

I am thankful for prayer-time ; it is a calm in life ; even I cannot be doing wrong outwardly, for I cover my face partly with my hand, so that no one can see how I look, and I am at liberty ! I cannot be speaking or doing what I should not, though sometimes I do get so absorbed in my own thoughts that I actually forget to kneel down ! Twice I have remained sitting, until an awful pause, a tremendous hush, has aroused me, and I have found the expectant household on their knees and papa gazing fixedly at me, till, horror-struck, and covered with shame, I have managed to get on my knees too, and the next thing I have been conscious of was hearing a prayer offered, that 'all desire of singularity, all wish to attract

notice, all self-seeking, might be taken from us, and rooted out of our hearts.'

Last night papa prayed that self-will and evil tempers might be striven against, and that we might be induced to endeavour to seek earnestly after 'those frames of mind and dispositions of heart which were acceptable in the sight of God and well-pleasing to our fellow-men.' How remarkably fond he is of that expression! Ah me! I was in no angelic temper when we knelt down, and I am sure I was not in one when we arose from our knees.

After prayers, we immediately retire to bed. Order is the rule of our household. Prayer is commenced the minute after the hall clock has ceased striking the hour of ten. I am glad it is so! I love the night, I like it to be long. There is no time to me so beautiful as night. Aunt Gretta, dear, kind, good soul! never troubles her head about night-lamps or candles, so I have precious quiet hours, and when I am not writing or

reading, I love better than either to throw up the window and be still. Beautiful night! No storm, no wrestling, no anguish, but peace! Quiet, brooding stillness. Rest for the weary, the over-burdened, the disappointed, the sorrowing! No time so beautiful to me as that time when silent night spreads her dark wings over land and shore. I know she hides the woe and wail of a world only for a time, but it is hidden.

I lighted my candle the moment prayers were over, and hoped I might slip quietly out of the room; but it was not to be so. Papa called me back. 'Maude!'

'Yes, papa.'

'I am grieved at your conduct to-night my child—much grieved; in fact, your behaviour is a constant source of grief to me. It is indeed a matter for regret, that our peace and harmony as a family should have such sad inroads made into it by a constant display of temper from you. Surely, my child, for all our sakes, it would be worth while

for you to try and conquer those faults to which, unhappily, you are so sadly prone.'

'What have I done to-night?' I asked.

'Maude, it grieves me much that, however kindly you are spoken to, you invariably evince a disposition to defend yourself, and argue the point, instead of at once admitting your error and being thankful to have your faults patiently and kindly pointed out.'

'I only asked what I had done,' I said, in as steady a voice as I could command.

'There is no occasion for me to enumerate the many exhibitions of evil temper which have occurred this evening,' said papa; 'I regret to say that they are too apparent to all around you and too unpleasant a subject for me to dwell upon. It is an extraordinary thing to me, Maude, that you never will under any circumstances acknowledge yourself to be in fault.'

I turned away. What could I say? and as I turned away a heavy sigh from papa

followed me. I would have given worlds for power to speak, and tell him that I did not wish to do wrong, but it would only be wasting words ; I had tried long ago, and had given it up in despair.

‘ Maude,’ called Charlotte, as I was leaving the room, ‘ Maude, perhaps you will be kind enough in future to give your family the benefit of your rude speeches when they are alone ; if our visitors are to have the pleasure of hearing them, we may close our doors at once.’

‘ What have I said ?’ I demanded, fiercely. ‘ You have accused me, and you shall tell me. What have I done ? I have a right to know, and I will. Out with it.’

The vehemence with which I spoke made everyone look at me. Charlotte made no reply, except one which of all others rouses my blood and sets me on fire. She smiled a smile at papa of such mingled sympathy, distress, and grief at my passion as almost drove me wild. I was not, and I had not been wicked ; and for Charlotte to

pity papa because he had such a daughter, and herself because she had such a sister, when she made me so, was more than I could bear.

‘Maude,’ said papa, in a low, deep voice, ‘retire to your own room and there pray in secret that the God who “heareth in secret” may forgive you the dreadful exhibition of temper which you have just shown to your sister.’

I came up at once. Pray! It is long since I prayed. I laugh at the idea. Pray, indeed! If God were just and kind, would He not have some pity on me?

After I had sat by the open window until all the sounds in the house were still, I stole out softly, and crept into Gypsie’s room. Fast asleep though he was, he put his little hand in mine when he felt my touch, and murmured, ‘Sister Maude.’ I could not stay long; I should have wet his pillow so with tears that I was afraid he might find it out, and say something before them.

I was calm when I got back to my own room. A few minutes after there was a knock at the door, and, opening it, I saw Aunt Gretta in costume *à la nuit*—slippers, dressing-gown, and a night-cap with a border two inches high, closely tied under the chin with a piece of red flannel and a fold of grey flannel round her throat.

‘Maude, my dear,’ she said in a whisper, ‘you are not at all well to-night. I have brought you some globules of “aconite”; it will be the best, I think, or you may take “pulsatilla,” if you will. Let me feel your pulse; yes, it is going very fast; slight fever and bad sore throat, I have no doubt. Dear, dear, how soon you do take cold, to be sure!’

‘I have no cold, Aunt Gretta,’ I said.

‘Why, my dear! Now, do not be contradictory; your eyes are as red as can be with cold. Let me look at your tongue. Yes, I thought so; a slight febrile affection induced by cold. Stay—I think pilules will be better than globules. I will get some.’

‘ Dear Aunt Gretta, please don’t. I don’t want it, indeed I don’t.’

‘ Not want *pulsatilla* ! What then do you want ? Will you have “ *bella donna* ” ?’

‘ No, no ; please Aunt Gretta, don’t ——’

‘ Don’t what ? I wish you would not be childish, Maude. I haven’t perfect faith in homœopathy myself, I confess, and I would not have Dr. Vanny know for the world that I use it so much ; still, for some things I am convinced there is nothing like it. Now, for instance ——’

‘ Please Aunt Gretta, I shall get cold, and you will too if we stand here.’

It was a happy thought ; the only possible way in which I could have induced Aunt Gretta to leave me without a history connected with homœopathy.

‘ Very true, my love. How thoughtless of me ! Good gracious, Maude ! if you haven’t got your window wide open ! Oh dear, what will become of us ?’

‘ Nothing, if only you will go, Aunt

Gretta. I don't mean to be unkind, but please do go. Here, I will swallow the bottleful of those white dots, if that will do.'

'Maude, you really are very trying! You must on no account take more than one pilule or three globules now, and to-morrow morning first thing I will send you some more. Get into bed as quickly as you possibly can; here is a piece of red flannel to wrap round your head; red flannel is an excellent thing, my old doctor always said——'

'Aunt Gretta, I am getting such a cold,' and I managed to execute a sneeze which fairly drove Aunt Gretta away, and I got the door closed.

By the way, I wonder where that piece of red flannel is? I haven't the faintest idea what I did with it.

How pleasant it was to be alone again by the open window! Yes, this world is beautiful! After all, I am not sorry that my birthday is in June.

CHAPTER II.

Friday, June 26.

YESTERDAY, I thought I would rub out the remembrance of that evening of my birthday, and try to please papa ; but, somehow, I began badly. I got up early, and thought I would take Gypsie a long walk, for papa is a great advocate for early rising and walking before breakfast.

We had a beautiful walk ; two miles, or nearly three, and we came in with lovely flowers all dew-laden—dog-roses, wet and shining ; pinky-pale convolvuli ; the frail wood-anemone, the blue gentian and delicate columbine and drooping blue-bell, and some lovely fern-leaves among them. I laid them

down before papa on the breakfast-table as I wished him 'good morning.'

'Good morning, Maude,' he said, in a tone which showed me what a good memory he had.

I did not like to offer to kiss him. I am so dreadfully afraid of seeming to ask for kindness when he thinks I do not deserve it.

'We have had such a lovely walk, papa,' I said.

"We," said papa.

'Gypsie and I.'

'You have never been taking that child out, Maude, on an empty stomach !' exclaimed Aunt Gretta, in horror.

I confess the thought of Gypsie's empty stomach had never struck me.

'Really, Maude, I do wish you had a little more judgment,' said papa.

'I thought you liked us to go out before breakfast so much,' I said, and I am afraid a slight accent of despair or impatience mingled with the words.

‘ Beginning to cavil as usual, Maude ! Did I ever say I did not like you to go out before breakfast ? ’

‘ But you found fault with it, papa. ’

‘ I found fault ! your father is not in the habit, Maude, of finding fault without sufficient reason. ’

‘ Of which there is no lack, I am sorry to say, ’ said Charlotte. ‘ Just look at the mess you have made with those rubbishing flowers on the clean breakfast-cloth. ’

‘ And wet with dew ! ’ cried Aunt Gretta. ‘ Oh, Maude, my dear child, you will have taken your death with cold as well as Gypsie ! You will both be laid up before the day is out. ’

‘ I am quite well, Aunt Gretta, ’ said dear little Gypsie.

‘ I think “aconite” will be the best, ’ soliloquised Aunt Gretta, bending over her homœopathic case, which she had drawn from her pocket whilst speaking.

‘ I have never objected to your taking

moderate exercise before breakfast,' said papa ; ' but all at once to take up a matter in this vehement way, without the least judgment, and to exhaust your little brother as well as yourself——'

' We are not exhausted, papa,' I ventured to put in.

' Can you not admit your fault even in such a small matter as this, Maude, without making contention about it ? '

' I do not want to make any contention,' I said, with tears in my eyes ; ' I only wanted ——' but I could get no further.

' Perhaps you will sit down, Maude,' said Charlotte ; ' we want to begin breakfast, and it will be rather inconvenient to be kept waiting until you have done talking ; it may be some time.'

I sat down, but all the brightness had gone out of me.

' Are they not pretty, papa ? Are not Maude's wild flowers beautiful ? ' said Gypsie, holding some up for papa's notice.

‘ They are very pretty, my boy ; all God’s gifts are “good.” “ He has made all things beautiful in their season,” and “ all His works praise Him.” ’

‘ We went nearly three miles,’ pursued Gypsie, innocently, ‘ a beautiful —— ’

Gypsie forgot to finish his sentence, he was so much startled by Aunt Gretta’s exclamation.

‘ Three miles on an empty stomach ! My dear Maude, how could you be so thoughtless ? And after the pilule I gave you last night. Three miles ! and they are so beneficial, and you did not have the other which was waiting for you. Poor little Gypsie I can see is quite worn out. It is very kind of you indeed, Maude, to do so much for Gypsie and to get such beautiful flowers, but do think another time what you are doing.’

‘ Whatever possessed you, Maude ? ’ said Maggie. ‘ I would not have walked one mile before breakfast to save my life.’

‘ I daresay you would not,’ I said.

‘ Dear me ! now don’t be cross. I wonder you should take the trouble to be cross.’

‘ I am not cross,’ I said.

Charlotte laughed—a laugh which is infinitely more trying to me than any words, and papa said, ‘ Maude, if you would have a little more consideration and thoughtfulness, you would not be so constantly committing these follies ; this is just where you get wrong. No one finds fault with you for taking a little air and exercise before breakfast ; that is highly desirable and beneficial, and habitually what I do myself ; but there is, or ought to be, moderation and consistency in all things. We are enjoined to “ let our moderation be known unto all men.” ’

Maggie yawned, and by that sign I knew papa’s speech was finished. Aunt Gretta, who had left the room, now returned with a wine-glass in each hand, in which was a small quantity of milky-looking water, which she administered to Gypsie and myself, and afterwards, being persuaded that neither of us

were absolutely sinking, she resumed her seat at the breakfast-table, and, the letters happily being brought in, attention was diverted from Gypsie and me.

I must not write any more now. It is my afternoon at the school, and I will really try and not be late. I should like, too, to have a few minutes to say a kind word to Mr. Morris, as I may not see him again before he leaves. This new schoolmaster will come next week. How I do hate having strangers about !

Sunday, June 28.

What a lovely morning ! It is delightful to get up early on Sunday morning and listen to those bells pealing through the sweet summer air. The Stonecross bells are always rung on Sunday morning, from seven to eight. I never hear any peal of bells equal to it.

It is one of my happiest hours, this early hour on Sunday morning. I hope I shall get through to-day without trouble ! But that

is more than I can expect. Still, I will try and keep my temper. I feel so sore and wounded—touchy, I think that is the word. I have read somewhere that when a man has been flayed, the slightest touch hurts him ; and so I think it is with me.

I heard papa say something about asking Mr. Morris up to dinner to-day, as it is his last Sunday. I hope he will, though it is not very pleasant generally having these sort of people up, but then Mr. Morris is very simple and unassuming ; besides, he is in such trouble that one cannot help wishing to be as kind as possible to him.

I think I shall venture to take Gypsie out for a stroll in the garden. Here he comes ! I hear his pattering feet. ‘ Sister Maude ! ’ ‘ Yes, Gypsie, coming ! ’

Sunday Evening.

Well, the day is over, and it has not been very bad. I have been very happy with my children in the Sunday-school. But it

comes with a terrible feeling to me sometimes that I *ought* not to be happy, and that I must be a vile hypocrite. What does it matter? Life is all a sham from beginning to end. And surely it is not wrong to enjoy the children's hymns; I could almost cheat myself into the belief that I am a Christian when I hear those little untimed voices singing—

I want to be like Jesus,
I never never find
That He though persecuted was
To anyone unkind.
I want to be like Jesus,
So gentle and so meek,
For no one marked an angry word
That ever heard him speak.

And again :

Though often here we're weary,
There is sweet rest above,
A rest that is eternal,
Where all is peace and love.
Our Saviour will be with us,
E'en to the journey's end,
In every sore distress
His promised aid to lend.

If I only believed it! When Dr. Vanny

returns, I shall do much better on Sundays, for he always comes up some part of the day. Mr. Retnor constantly comes to dinner on Sunday, and he rouses such a feeling of opposition in me, I can't describe it. He is one of those men who have the most extraordinary and immense capabilities for making one uncomfortable. If you have a pet theory, Mr. Retnor is sure to advance something in direct contradiction to it; if you have a thought rather precious which you don't want canvassing before other people, that man is sure to come down upon it, and drag it into light; if there is a subject above all others which you are anxious to avoid talking about, Mr. Retnor is certain to pitch upon that particular subject, and examine it in all its bearings with such a rough hand and coarse touch, you cannot keep silence. If there be a pugnacious point in your disposition, that point is sure to be assailed by Mr. Retnor. And he constantly comes to dinner on Sunday. I wish the Convocation, at their next assembly, would issue

a decree, requiring every clergyman to dine at his own table on Sundays, or, if he hasn't one, at his landlady's. That is very selfish of me. I daresay there is many a poor curate whose Sunday's dinner at his rich rector's is one of the things for which in his morning's service, he gives 'most humble and hearty thanks.' But then, Mr. Retnor is not poor, he is very rich. And then, every family is not like ours. I daresay to many the clergyman dining with them is a real boon. Well, I can only say it is not a boon to me, and I wish the bishop of the diocese would take the matter into serious consideration, for I am certain that nothing short of an ecclesiastical regulation or a civil law will keep Mr. Retnor at home to dinner on Sundays.

I am truly sorry for poor Mr. Morris! How glad I am that I went to see his wife before she died! He seemed as I came from church with him to dwell upon his trouble with such a longing to speak about it, that one cannot but indulge him.

‘ I thought we had so many happy years before us, Miss Maude,’ he said.

‘ Indeed, I am very sorry for you, Mr. Morris,’ I said ; ‘ it must be such a dreadful trouble, that very few can sympathise with you.’

‘ It was very kind of you to come and see her,’ he said ; ‘ she often hoped you would come to see baby.’

‘ Indeed, that was nothing. I am very glad now that I did. It was a very pretty little baby,’ I added, not knowing quite what I ought to say.

I wished I could think of something, but nothing would occur to me ; it seemed to me that nothing could comfort in such a trouble. But it was something to keep him away from Mr. Retnor, who would have begun to talk to him with a perfect forgetfulness that he was talking to a man who was smarting under a heavy trouble.

Gypsie had been walking along quietly by us, his little hand in mine. He had been

witnessing poor Mr. Morris's evident distress in wondering silence, and he now began to talk in a confidential undertone to me. 'Where has the pretty baby gone to, Maude?'

'Gone to heaven, dear Gypsie,' I was obliged to answer. Under the circumstances, what could I say? To have admitted a doubt of there being a heaven before Mr. Morris, who devoutly believed his wife and baby to be there, would have been absolute cruelty.

'Why did it go?' asked Gypsie.

'Because God saw fit to take it,' I said, answering what I thought I ought to.

'Was it kind of God to take it, Maude, when Mr. Morris loved it so much and wanted it to stay?'

'God knows much better than we do, Gypsie.'

'Does He never do the least bit wrong?' asked Gypsie.

'Never.' Oh, my wretched self! But I must talk properly to Gypsie.

‘How do you know, Maude ; are you quite sure ?’

‘The Bible says so, Gypsie, and papa says that all that is in the Bible is true.’

‘It didn’t *seem* kind of God to take away Mr. Morris’s baby, and its mamma, did it, Maude ?’

‘No, it did not ; but then it might be really kind.’

‘If I were God I would not do what *seems* unkind, would you, Maude ? I would try to seem kind, because you know it is so much nicer to seem kind. I am very sorry that God makes Mr. Morris so unhappy. If I had been God I would not have taken the little baby away, Maude, would you ?’

‘I cannot possibly tell, dear Gypsie. The Bible says that God always does right.’

‘Well, I will try and think so, Maude, if you say so ; but I shall ask God in my prayer to night to *seem* kind as well as to *be* kind. But the baby has gone ; it will be too late. Do you think, Maude, if I prayed very much

that God would send Mr. Morris his baby back again ? ’

‘ No, Gypsie ; but perhaps God might make Mr. Morris not feel so very unhappy. ’

‘ Then, Mr. Morris, ’ said Gypsie aloud, and turning to Mr. Morris, ‘ I shall pray very much to-night, and if the baby can never come back, perhaps God would hold it in his arms a little bit, and just let you look at it and kiss it ; you would like that very much, would you not ? ’

‘ Hush, hush, Gypsie, dear, ’ I said.

Fortunately we were just at home. Papa met me at the door. Mr. Morris had said he would like to walk on a little further, as there was time before dinner. ‘ Maude ! ’ papa said, ‘ I want you for a moment in the library. ’

My heart sank. ‘ Maude, I want you in the library, ’ has a dreadful sound to me. This time it was to show me the extreme folly of indulging Mr. Morris in a display of exaggerated feeling with a view to exciting

sympathy; it could do no good, and certainly did great harm. And I had felt so happy when I saw Mr. Morris's look, and heard his word of thanks when he left me at the gate!

I got out into the garden where I could not be seen, and gave way to a passion of tears. I know it was a small and insignificant circumstance, not worthy of tears. But it is so hard! Whatever I do with the kindest motives or best intentions, to be misjudged in this way! I am afraid of doing anything, afraid of speaking or looking as I feel. I wonder if there is a God, why He could not take me instead of Mrs. Morris.

Gypsie found me out in a few minutes, and put his loving arms about my neck and kissed my wet cheeks. 'Maudie, Maudie, why are you crying, what is the matter?'

'Nothing, dear Gypsie.'

'Nothing! then why are you crying? Oh poor sister Maude! it is for the dear little baby!'

'No indeed, Gypsie, it is not.'

‘Then what is it? It *is* for the baby, and I mean to ask God to-night-to let you see it as well as Mr. Morris.’

‘Do you, Gypsie?’

‘Yes. I think God will hear me. I prayed so much last week that my white rabbit might not die, and it did; so now I think God can never do two things which *seem* so unkind together; one would be enough, and I think if I ask Him, He will bring the baby back for you and Mr. Morris to see. I mean to ask Him very much to-night. We shall see;’ and Gypsie sat thinking a minute with his head on my lap; and then he suddenly asked, ‘Maude, did God see it to be right that my white rabbit should die?’

‘I suppose so, Gypsie.’

‘You only s’pose so, Maude?’

‘I feel almost sure of it, Gypsie.’

‘I don’t,’ said Gypsie, decidedly. ‘I asked God that night why He let it die, and He never answered me; so I s’pose He didn’t like to tell me that He didn’t know why;’

Gypsie asked, after a moment's pause, 'Maude, will my white rabbit see the baby now ?'

'No, I think not, Gypsie.'

'But, Maude, why ; if God took them both, and they were both so pretty, could'nt He put them both together ?'

'The white rabbit had no soul, Gypsie ; and the Bible says the baby had a soul.'

'Who gave it its soul ?' asked Gypsie.

'God.'

'Then, why didn't He give my white rabbit a soul ?'

'Animals don't have souls,' I said evasively, and feeling that Gypsie's questions were getting something too hard for me.

'But why ? If God has souls, why doesn't He put them in rabbits as well as babies ? I am sure it was quite as pretty as the baby, my white rabbit was. I shall ask Him to-night to bring a soul for my other rabbit, when He brings the baby back a little bit ; but perhaps God does not like black

rabbits as well as white ones ; but if He does, and brings it a soul, then when *it* dies it will see the baby, won't it, Maude ?'

Dear little Gypsie looked so earnest and hopeful at this new view of the case, that I warmly assented, and he was satisfied.

If papa had heard me ! I hope Gypsie will forget all about it. The first bell rang just then, and when the second rang Gypsie and I were in our seats at the table.

Mr. Retnor began, as I was sure he would, upon subjects most harrowing to Mr. Morris. The poor man looked imploringly at me, but I durst not say a word ; only I did try to bring other subjects of conversation forward, even at the risk of Charlotte's anger. Mr. Retnor is always willing to talk to me.

But was he born without any tact, any penetration, any power of seeing, when he was inflicting actual pain upon those around him ? I believe he was. I believe if I had told him that he had made this poor school-

master miserable throughout the whole of dinner, he would have thought I was out of my mind.

He was in great good-humour for me for talking to him. Had he seen what was passing in my mind ! I was prepared for Charlotte's remarks to me afterwards, and they came as truly as a ship full sail into harbour ; but I did not care, for I had saved Mr. Morris a little pain, though I had not saved him from some questions as to the state of mind in which his wife had died. ' Did she express contrition, penitence ? ' (I suppose for general faults, Mr. Retnor did not specify.) ' Had her end been peace ? ' Could Mr. Morris count with assurance upon her being among the ' eternally saved ? ' He (Mr. Retnor) trusted Mr. Morris did not dwell on ' vague hopes ; ' it was always well to have substantial ground to rest upon in these cases ; he feared ' death-bed repentances ' were the most deceitful things under the sun. '

How could he say such things ? Did

being Mr. Morris's minister give Mr. Retnor any right to drag to light before other people that subject which of all others should be sacred? Odious man! Mr. Retnor *is* an odious man. I cannot help saying it, though it is Sunday night, and I have been listening to his sermon this afternoon. He is a thoroughly odious man. It relieves me very much to write it, and I think the words look remarkably nice upon paper. I am glad that I have the power of being rude and disagreeable to him.

We all went to church in the afternoon except Aunt Gretta and Maggie. Maggie never goes, and papa does not insist upon it, though I know he wishes it. She would sleep all the time if she did, so I cannot see what advantage it would be to her. Aunt Gretta does not go, because she thinks it so bad for the digestion to walk after dinner. Papa sits in the reading-desk, and fortunately when he is sitting down he cannot see my corner; neither can Mr. Retnor,

ours being one of those queer, odd-shaped pews, which fit round the pulpit. Charlotte listens most attentively to every word which falls from Mr. Retnor's lips ; she must have a delightful time. Gypsie generally falls fast asleep when the sermon begins ; nobody ever thinks of finding fault with him for doing so, for he is only five years old. I put him against me, and all his golden curls are crushed up, and his little chubby hand clasps mine. If I believed the Bible, I should say he looked the picture of one of those little ones which 'do always behold the face of the Father in Heaven.'

I am sure the sight of him keeps the Sunday-school children in the gallery quiet. I can see them looking with such dumb admiration, and nudging each other to look at him.

I stayed to shake hands with Mr. Morris when we came out of church. He was turning away, when he hesitated. I thought he wanted to say something, but did not know

how to frame it. At last, he said, 'Miss Maude, would it be taking a great—that is—might I—should you think it very impertinent of me——'

I tried to help him. 'Pray tell me if there is anything I can do for you, and it certainly shall be done.'

'Miss Maude, would you?' I don't think he would ever have got it out, but Charlotte and Mr. Retnor appeared in the distance, and he hurried to say, 'Would you sometimes go and see her grave, and not let the flowers run wild? No one will look after it now I——'

'Indeed, I will,' I said; 'you may depend upon me tending it and keeping it most carefully.'

'God bless you, Miss Maude!' and the poor man got away before Charlotte and Mr. Retnor came up.

Papa had stayed behind whilst the charity of so many loaves (according to the will and bequest of Mistress Margaret Maynard some

worthy ancestor of ours) was being distributed to twelve poor women of the parish of Stone-cross, ——shire. Gypsie and I had the walk home to ourselves. We always go by the river-side when we are alone, and climb the stiles like village urchins ; and though it is up and down and round and about, we both think it is delightful.

The sweet stillness of this June afternoon, with only Gypsie for my companion, was enchanting ; and we resolved to make a weekly visit to Mrs. Morris's grave, and I think the best time will be on Sunday evening, when Charlotte has her class.

Mr. Retnor came to tea, but, fortunately, he had to leave early to take the duty in the next village.

There is Charlotte's Bible-class commencing ; I hear them singing. What a slow, solemn dirge for those clear young voices ! I declare it makes me long to strike up ' Sally in our alley,' or ' Methusalem, Methusalem,' or shout ' Hallelujah ' as I heard them

shouting it in that little Methodist chapel this afternoon when we came from church. That chapel is Mr. Retnor's thorn in the flesh. I believe he would gladly have the trouble of carrying away every inch of it, stone by stone, with his own hands, and flinging them one by one into the river, than it should stand there, a grief to his body, and a trouble and perplexity to his very soul. I have a malicious pleasure in looking at it, and thinking what a tidy, comfortable little place it is. They really were making a frightful noise as we passed this afternoon. What lungs they must have ! I don't wonder at Aunt Gretta finding out so many cases of sore-throat and bronchial affection in the village. I have the greatest curiosity to know what they do inside that little building ; the sounds proceeding from it on Sunday afternoon are perfectly exhilarating ! they make me feel as if I could dance a hornpipe on the green in front, and Gypsie always begins to caper about when he comes within hearing distance,

without knowing in the least why or wherefore.

I really cannot bear to listen to that tune of Charlotte's any longer. I will shut my book up and go out.

CHAPTER III.

Tuesday, June 30.

I HAD not to go to the girls' school to-day, though it is the day on which I usually go down. The children are having holiday, as the new master does not come until Wednesday.

Aunt Gretta and I spent the morning in making calls. Of all social duties I do think 'making calls' is the most disagreeable. To have to say, and look, and be what is 'proper,' is the most horrid way of spending a morning of which I know. If only I might have stayed at home with Gypsie ; but no, of course I must go, because Charlotte was not in the humour, and Maggie said she could do nothing all day but sit in the shade. It really is too bad !

I had to put on a rustling silk this hot day, and take a card-case in my hand, and look smiling and pleased, when in my heart I felt as savage as an out-witted diplomatist. And then to have to sit in a close carriage on a day like this is suffocating ! I am sure this morning I could scarcely breathe. Aunt Gretta was occupied all the way in discovering a spot of grease on her rich new satin, speculating how it got there and the best method of having it taken off. 'Why must we wear rich silks and satins ?' I asked. 'My dear, we must do what is becoming to our station in life,' was the reply. I wish we might dress like our forefathers, in the skins of wild beasts. I would choose the skin of a hunted hyena, or a chained panther, wrestling and striving to be free.

We left dear little Gypsie running wild in the garden, looking so cool and summer-like in his brown holland suit and straw hat, and kissing his hand to 'Aunt *Getta*' and 'Sister Maude,' and very sorry that 'Maudie' had to

go and make calls instead of staying with him. My darling ! If it were not for you, I often think that when I am twenty-one—nay, it is twenty-five in not married—but when I get my own fortune, I would travel far beyond the seas, and try if I could not live well, live worthily, not crushed, but brave, upright ! But what is the use of writing in this way ? Gypsie and I will have a ramble in the woods to rub off the effects of this morning's dose of calls.

Wednesday, July 1.

I thought Gypsie and I would have such a pic-nic in the woods to-day ! I was coaxing Aunt Gretta all yesterday afternoon, and at last gained her consent. I had to persuade her that no evil beast would devour us, that we should not have a sun-stroke, that we should not get our feet soaked through in the brook, that we should not be stung all over by gnats, that it would not come on a thunder-storm and we be struck by lightning, that no tree would fall upon us, that no gypsies would

attack us—Papa being a magistrate, and particularly strict in enforcing the regulation—that none but a little Gypsie should torment us. This last declaration made Aunt Gretta smile ; and when I promised that we would each take two globules of ‘aconite’ when we returned, and swallow some more the next morning, I carried my point, and gained permission to instruct the housekeeper to prepare what we wanted for our repast. And then, after all my trouble, if papa did not inform us at dinner that he had been to the schools this morning to see his new master installed ; that he had invited him to come and take tea with us this afternoon, and of course we should all treat him with ‘courtesy and kindness,’ looking particularly at me when he made this last request, which look I quite understood.

It is an old charge against me that I am so ‘dignified’—no, they do not give me such a large word—rude, ill-mannered to this class of people ; (I suppose I was so to Mr. Morris last Sunday morning). I am sure I never

mean to be, and I do not believe that I am. I confess I cannot see the necessity for the constant demand upon our time which these people make. Every official of every degree must be invited at stated intervals to drink tea at 'the Rectory.' Papa invites them as regularly and methodically as old Putman says, 'Amen,' from the clerk's desk on Sunday morning. I suppose it is one of the duties devolving upon a rector, but I am sure it is a very disagreeable one for his family. Papa makes a perfect martyr of himself to the duties of his 'parish.' It is his very Jugger-naut, and he would throw himself before the wheels of the car and die a glorious death of self-renunciation for the villages of Stonecross, Longfarm, and Sandrun.

Every schoolmistress and schoolmaster, the teachers and scholars, the clerk and bell-ringers, the vergers and sextons, the pew-openers and church cleaners, and the whole body of choirs, organists and singers, from the three villages, each and all must, at

appointed times, either have their beer in the servants' hall, or their tea in the parlour of Stonecross Rectory. I suppose it is all right, but that makes it none the less troublesome. It is so very difficult to know how to talk to the female part of them ; they come in such very extraordinary best clothes and best manners, and they look so uncomfortable and ill at ease. I am always thankful when these evenings of official duty are over. These people do such things in their efforts to be polite ! They put their feet or chair on your dress every time they move, drop their bread and butter on the cloth, and then, in their violent efforts to take it up, let it fall on the floor, and are sure to upset either their tea or a vase of flowers.

I believe I am very cross. I really am disappointed that Gypsie and I cannot have our pic-nic in the woods ; it may be so long before we have the chance again, and Aunt Gretta does take such hours of persuading ! And now, when it was all arranged, to have

to stay at home because this stupid old school-master must come to tea, and as the clergyman's family we must attend to the 'good of the parish.' Such nonsense ! It is nonsense, even though the Rev. Dr. Maynard, with all the initials after his name, said it.

One thing I am glad of, and that is, that it is a man and not a woman who is coming to tea. I always find men, even the silliest of them, better to entertain than women. They do not know exactly what you have on, and what you ought to have had on ; what there is to tea, and what there ought to have been ; what you said, and what you ought not to have said ; how much new furniture there was in the room, and how much old ; what wages James and the waitress probably have, and what they ought to have ; what an amount of work the housemaids do, and how much they ought to do. Men do not notice all these things with that small, and yet magnifying, glance which characterises women generally. They seem to have eyes all over

them when they come here. And yet, for the good of the parish, all has to be borne. I wonder when the 'good of the parish' will be eternally secured.

Really, if I were not very bad-tempered, I should not grudge these people the small pleasure of saying—they have been 'at the Hall;' they have 'taken tea at Dr. Maynard's.' But when they are females, it does happen to fall rather heavily on me. Papa withdraws after tea; Charlotte will not be troubled to talk to them; Maggie plays with her fancy work, and stares at them from the depths of the arm-chair; and though Aunt Gretta is as kind as possible, it is not very entertaining for them to hear all the evening of Providential openings, homœopathy, allopathy, hydropathy, feelings and frames of the various organs of the body; so I have to do my very best to make the evenings pass; and a precious piece of work it is sometimes. 'Thank you.' 'Oh, no.' 'Oh, yes.' 'Just as you like.' 'Certainly.' 'I am very much obliged.' These

six phrases, with inflections, slight verbal changes, and small alterations, give the entire compass of their conversational powers.

I am so cross that I will not write any more. I will put my book away and dress. I must not go down looking like this, or what will they say to me? I do hope this new man—whatever is his name?—I cannot remember it; but I do hope he is not a creature who will give himself airs, and make himself very much at home. I hope he will quite understand that he is simply asked in his official character, as papa would ask the sweep, if he considered it a ‘duty he owed to the parish.’ Poor Mr. Morris and his wife were plain, sensible people, who never forgot their position however much you noticed them. I wonder what this man’s wife is like—by the way, I don’t know if he has one. It is a quarter to six!

Half-past Ten.

I could not sleep if I went to bed, so I think I will write a little. All is so quiet that

I can distinctly hear the babble of the brook over the stones ; there is not another sound, but now and then the breath of the wind through my chesnut and sycamore.

I love to look out upon the garden at this hour. Why, oh, why should I have to wake to-morrow to the pain and disappointment which beset my life ? It is *very* hard. Is there a God ? and, if so, am I too small, too insignificant a creature in this great world of glory and beauty for Him to notice or hear my cry ? Shall I never be helped, encouraged, told, at least, that I sometimes have tried after the right, that I did make some effort ? Will a hereafter ever come to throw any light over the rough way I have gone ? And if it should come, what will it be to me ? A vacuum, a chaos, annihilation, despair !—what, I know not and I care not. My heart has long been growing hardened, and when touched, only shows itself defiant, daring, dangerous !

And yet—yet. how fair and beautiful is

this little scene before me ! And for Christians who believe that there is a heaven lovelier far, and that it is really prepared for those who fulfil certain conditions here, and that the fitness for it often comes through suffering, is not that thought enough to make them willing to bear the suffering ? I suppose it would be.

But then, who knows anything about it ? It is all vague, uncertain, visionary. As for what papa and Mr. Retnor preach, I really don't believe one word of it. I suppose preaching and living by what they preach are two very different things. It is all a mystery to me from beginning to end, and never a greater mystery than when papa gets up into the pulpit, and looks so grand and noble, and says such eloquent and finished sentences. He is so stately in his bearing, he has such a melodious voice, such a patrician mien, he sets his Oxford gown off to perfection ; and his mass of quite white hair is all round his face like a halo. But when I do listen to his

sermons, it is always with a kind of dread of hearing something for myself. I should not be in the least surprised were he to lean over the side of the pulpit, look down upon me, and say, 'Maude, my child, have you got the better of your temper? Remember, he that "ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city."' I have drawn thick, black ink lines over that verse. I have blotted it out of my copy of the Bible. Papa presents each of us with a fresh copy, beautifully bound, every other birthday. I cannot bear to see the book; it is associated in my mind with—no, I will not say with what, but I cannot believe that if there be a God, and He made all things so beautiful as they look now, He would ever give those words for me to be tormented and driven wild by them.

But why should I think about this when I feel happier to-night? It has been quite a —I was going to say a happy evening. Mr. Retnor was called away to see a dying parishioner—why he ever came I don't know.

I am sure he was not asked, for papa must see his overbearing manner to his inferiors, and he would not, I know, have asked him to-night; though really this schoolmaster,—this Mr. Farren, does not seem the least like an inferior. An inferior to Mr. Retnor! no, it would be difficult to find that. For shame, Maude! Mr. Retnor is of a county family, has a large fortune, once asked you to be his wife (though no one knows of *that*), and probably will be your brother-in-law.

But this Mr. Farren does not seem at all the kind of man you would expect him to be. And yet he is the son of a mechanic! I heard him say so, and with as much apparent satisfaction as if he were announcing himself to be the son of a duke! What was it I happened to hear him say to papa—the words attracted my attention. I think they were these—‘The royalty of right-doing.’ The royalty of right-doing! I don’t quite understand what it means. I wonder in what sense he was using the phrase.

How he talked to papa! He was as much at home with him as if he had known him all his life, and combated papa's favourite opinions with as much composure and firmness as if he were talking to one of his rough-headed schoolboys. I thought papa looked a little astonished, especially when, making some quotation in Latin, he afterwards translated it for Mr. Farren's benefit, it appeared that the translation was quite unnecessary. Mr. Farren understood the original quite as well as Dr. Maynard himself. After this, I listened as much as I could to what they said.

'Are you, then, a Latin and Greek scholar, Mr. Farren?' inquired papa, drawing himself up, sitting very erect in his chair, putting his eye-glass to his eyes, and speaking in a slow, deep, measured voice, which seemed to come from a long way down his chest. Did he mean to annihilate this poor young schoolmaster—did he mean to crush him with a look for his audacity in presuming to understand the languages in which Dr. Maynard, his

patron and benefactor, was so learned a scholar? I know not. I only know that he drew himself up and settled himself firmly, until his chair creaked like a dozen doors turning on rusty hinges.

Mr. Farren neither sunk into the earth and disappeared from the orbs behind the eyeglass, nor stammered, blushed, and looked foolish. He replied, unconcernedly, 'I do not venture to call myself a scholar; I have some slight acquaintance with those languages.'

'A-hem,' coughed papa; 'it is not often we find a man—ah—a man occupying a post, I will venture to say, so honourable and useful as that of a schoolmaster of a large national school who is able to boast of—of that class of acquirements.'

'I trust I have made no boast of it,' said Mr. Farren, quietly; 'and I believe scarcely any amount or variety of knowledge will be useless to a man who is anxious rightly to teach others.'

‘Certainly not, certainly not,’ said papa. ‘I truly rejoice to find that we agree on this point.’

Mr. Farren bowed.

‘You will, however, I trust,’ continued papa, ‘equally agree with me that what is desirable for the youth of an agricultural district, like the one we at present inhabit, is a sound, practical, elementary English education; an education comprising all essentials and excluding all matters of supererogation.’

‘Certainly,’ said Mr. Farren, I could not help thinking in a very indifferent tone.

‘You, I infer, Mr. Farren, have had an education different to that which is generally bestowed upon—upon——’

‘Upon certificated teachers.’

‘Ah, yes! upon certificated teachers.’

‘I am not aware that I can claim a large amount of superiority over my fellow-teachers. Happily, when I was a boy, a gentleman in our neighbourhood discovered whither my tastes tended, and was kind enough to en-

courage them in various ways. It is to his generosity that I owe anything more than the most ordinary education. I have worked my own way up, Dr. Maynard.'

'So much the better,' said Dr. Maynard, evidently relieved by finding that his new schoolmaster was not an Oxford professor in disguise, or the scapegrace son of a lord. 'So much the better. If there is one man whom I revere in this world of workers above another, Mr. Farren, it is the man who, having surmounted difficulties and vanquished hindrances, at length enjoys the well-earned success his merit demands.'

Again Mr. Farren bowed. I fancy Dr. Maynard's remarks were slightly too much that of the patron to suit his taste.

'Your father,' continued papa, 'would doubtless be pleased to see his son steadily advancing in the pursuit of knowledge.'

'My father, sir,' said the young man, 'has been dead some years, and at his death the maintenance of a widowed mother wholly

devolved upon myself; consequently, I was obliged to relinquish my favourite pursuits and turn to the most available means for earning what is, unfortunately, a necessity, which does not come to us poor men for the mere asking—money.'

'Ah!' said papa, 'money! Yes, undoubtedly, a necessity; the acquisition of which however is to be held as far inferior to the acquisition of the stores of the learned and wise, by which our minds are enriched and fortified against the inevitable ills of life. "The love of money," Mr. Farren, says a great man—greater than you or I, sir—"the love of money is the root of all evil."'

'Unquestionably,' said Mr. Farren, with some lurking humour about his mouth; 'but, unfortunately, I never had such an intimate acquaintance with it as to be able to form an attachment to it.'

Papa looked, I thought, a little scandalised, and his lips appeared to be in a position to utter

the word 'levity ;' but as no word came, perhaps it was only my fancy.

'It is often,' he said, 'it is often, Mr. Farren, a happy thing for a young man of spirit and energy to be thrown entirely upon his own resources ; it develops an immense amount of power which might otherwise lie dormant.'

'I cannot but think, sir,' said Mr. Farren, 'that the cases are rare in which a little money might not confer more benefit than the absence of it is likely to do. The "latent power" which is developed without it might be more efficiently developed with it.'

'I certainly do not agree with you,' said papa.

'Ah, well !' said Mr. Farren, 'it is a difficult thing to learn to prize what we have never known the want of. I, who have been restrained and fettered all my life by the want of money, who have tasted high sources of enjoyment only to have the awakened taste thrown back upon me in strengthened desire

for more, may perhaps find some excuse if I place a value on money which the wealthy man can never discover.'

'The highest sources of gratification, Mr. Farren, are undoubtedly open to the man without means, almost equally as to the man with them.'

'I am unhappy enough entirely to disagree with that remark, with one exception,' said Mr. Farren.

'I am anxious to know what that exception is,' said papa.

'The royalty of right-doing is an equal prerogative of rich and poor,' said Mr. Farren; 'but, even here, I hold that men of wealth have far greater incentives to this same right-doing than poor men.'

'I cannot admit that at all,' said papa.

'Look, sir, at the numberless blessings which wealth enables a man to bestow upon his fellow-creatures! Is there a greater incentive to deeds of benevolence and generosity than witnessing the happiness to others which that

generosity secures ? Look at the intellectual gratification which wealth affords ! Is it not a mighty inducement to further effort to taste the high pleasures these gratifications secure ? Look at the woe and suffering which it alleviates ! What puts a man on such a vantage-ground of contentment with himself and the world as the consciousness of being a benefactor ? And, further and stronger, look at the terrible temptations from which wealth saves a man !

‘ I certainly do not agree with you,’ said papa.

‘ Sir,’ said Mr. Farren, very earnestly, ‘ consider a moment how many and terrible are the crimes to which poverty sometimes urges a human being. Goaded by the unquenchable desire to possess that from which he is debarred, he is not master of himself, and commits deeds from which his moral nature, in the summer atmosphere of competency, would have shrunk with loathing. The whole awakened being of the man cries out

for that which he cannot have, and of which there is no hope of his ever having ; and the insatiable demand, alas ! often proves too strong for his powers of resistance.'

' Surely, such views are extremely dangerous for a young man to advocate,' exclaimed papa.

' I am not advocating them, sir ; I am merely stating what experience has, unfortunately, proved in numberless instances to be true. I deplore that such should be the case ; but a sensible man cannot be wilfully blind to indisputable facts, however much he may lament them ; and it surely becomes those who are placed beyond the power of ever knowing what such temptations mean, to deal very gently with the erring. There is a strong tendency in human nature to judge with terrible severity the sins which by circumstances are out of the power of those who thus severely judge.'

' Mr. Farren, as a clergyman of the Church of England, I hold that the grace of God is

sufficient to overcome any temptation, however inherent and overwhelming, and however strong any conjunction of circumstances may combine to make it. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you ;" and, again, "There hath no temptation befallen you, but such as is common to man."'

'Undoubtedly, sir, in your position as a clergyman these are doctrines which are consistent with your profession to hold.'

'I trust, Mr. Farren, that I have your concurrence in these all-important points.'

Papa looked as if he would cashier him on the spot if the reply were not in the affirmative. It was a modernised miniature version of 'Mahomet or the sword?' But what about the freedom of opinion and system of toleration of which papa prides himself upon being such an advocate?

'Undoubtedly, sir; what I wish to advance is simply this—that mercy and leniency are the most becoming attitudes for one man who is placed above temptation to assume towards

another man to whom that temptation may come in a shape fiercer and hotter than hell itself.'

'Mercy, undoubtedly, as a great man tells us, is "mighty in the mightiest." I do not dispute that, Mr. Farren; but there is an injunction also in a book, the contents of which, I trust, are as familiar to you as to myself, that our "moderation should be known unto all men."'

'Sir?' said Mr. Farren, evidently not catching papa's meaning, so unconscious was he of having expressed himself warmly.

'Time will moderate all extreme views,' continued papa; 'it is undoubtedly characteristic of youth to be warm in expression as well as ultra in sentiment. Time, Mr. Farren, is a cure for all things.'

'You think so, sir? I am happy in having the result of your experience; but I believe it is a difficult thing for any man to sympathise with what he has known only in theory.'

Here my attention was taken by Aunt

Gretta. I should like to have heard papa and his schoolmaster talk longer. Surely, he is different to most men of his class! And he is different in other things too. He neither spilt his tea nor trod on our dresses; he did not tumble over a footstool in his hurry to be polite, or upset a plate of bread and butter.

He would not stay supper, but left soon after Mr. Retnor came in. I wonder how it is that Charlotte always sees some fault in everyone, even when they never exist. When we sat down to supper, she said to papa, 'Well, papa, your new schoolmaster wants a little conceit taken out of him.'

'Indeed, my dear. What have you noticed about him?'

How can papa think so much of Charlotte's opinion? I am sure she is most unjust in her remarks.

'He seems conceited and pragmatistical, but he may be a worker for all that. Could you not have put him on a lower salary, as he is not a married man?'

‘The idea did not occur to me,’ said papa.
‘If he does his work well we shall be satisfied.’

‘I think Miss Maynard’s suggestion a very good one,’ said Mr. Retnor; ‘the surplus might be devoted to repairs and conveniences in connection with the schools or alms-houses.’

‘I think there is a sufficient fund for all that is necessary,’ said papa; ‘so we will leave Mr. Farren to the enjoyment of his hundred and thirty a year.’

‘It is certainly more than a single man in his position wants,’ said Charlotte, ‘when he has so much found besides.’

‘Perhaps he may have wants, Charlotte, which all men in his position would not have. He seems an exceedingly well-educated young man. I infer that he has no mean acquaintance with the learned languages.’

‘Ah!’ said Mr. Retnor, ‘what does a man in his position want with that? Mere waste of time and money.’

‘I think so too,’ said Charlotte. ‘It is only putting ideas into his head quite un-

suitable, and making himself think he is somebody when he is nobody. He looks full of his own opinions.'

'So I thought,' said Mr. Retnor. 'He will find that won't do here; he will have to do as he is told.'

'We must not "despise his youth,"' said papa; 'and do not let us forget to exercise "that charity which thinketh no evil."'

Dear, good papa! Oh, why cannot he apply that 'charity' to me? I *must* be bad if I am beyond the reach of charity.

'I wonder where he has been brought up, to have no ear for music,' said Maggie. 'He never seemed to hear me when I offered to play to him; the man can't have a soul.'

'Margaret,' said papa, 'the fact that man became a "living soul" when his Creator breathed into him the breath of life, cannot be denied by any human being; do not, then, I beg, speak lightly of such a tremendous fact.'

'I hope,' remarked Aunt Gretta, before

Maggie had finished yawning, 'I hope that young man will see that the beds are well aired in the school-house. It would be a sad thing if he caught rheumatism. There is never any safety if beds are left.'

'Mr. Morris only left on Monday,' remarked Mr. Retnor. 'There has scarcely been time for the furniture to gather damp, so I think we may conclude that Mr. Farren runs no risk.'

'Well, yes, certainly,' said Aunt Gretta. 'It is not a long time, but still, I wish I had thought of advising him to put a hot bottle in his bed.'

'Good gracious, Aunt Gretta!' exclaimed Maggie. 'Telling a schoolmaster to put a hot bottle in his bed! What will you think of next?'

'It is not a thing to be despised, my dear,' said Aunt Gretta. 'It is a real comfort at any time. I remember——'

Charlotte interrupted Aunt Gretta by asking Mr. Retnor some question about the

archery meeting which is to be at Caldon Hall next week.

One thing I noticed about Mr. Farren which did please me so much. Gypsie took such a fancy to him ; and whenever Gypsie takes a decided fancy for anyone, he does not soon change. And how kind Mr. Farren was to the little man ! He took him on his knee and chatted to him as if he were his own little brother. Charlotte says it was a great liberty, and very impertinent. I don't think it was at all. I really don't think that Gypsie left Mr. Farren's side all the evening until Baynes came for him. He asked him all kinds of questions, which Mr. Farren answered with perfect readiness ; and Gypsie's questions are not always easy to answer. I am sure Mr. Farren is not only a reader, but a keen observer. There was no attempt to evade Gypsie, but he went into every matter, and made it interesting, and then listened with the greatest gravity to Gypsie's history of his rabbits, and doves, and pigeons. He

is fitted for something better than a village schoolmaster; he will never stay here.

For the first time in my life; I believe I hurried down from hearing Gypsie say his prayers. I begin to think I am not fit for that kind of thing, and perhaps I ought not to deceive Gypsie.

Well, I must go to bed. It is actually striking one o'clock. Oh, that archery meeting next week! I do hate going out. What a pleasant evening this has been! I am not sorry that Gypsie and I were prevented going to the woods.

CHAPTER IV.

Sunday, July 5.

A BEAUTIFUL day again! Such sunshine, and such a wealth of beauty in the garden. Next month we shall have to go to the sea-side. I wish we were not going. To be in an hotel with Charlotte is—never mind. ‘The royalty of right-doing.’ I remember it was Mr. Farren who used those words. I wonder if I could try and have it. I must remember to go and look at Mrs. Morris’s grave to-day. I will keep my promise to that poor man, though papa says I am constantly promising things and not performing them. I should not like them to know I had promised *that*. Gypsie and I will go this evening when Charlotte is having her class.

Sunday evening.

How quiet all is ! Miss Vernon and her brother, from Caldon Hall, walked home with us from church, but did not stay dinner. All the conversation was about the forthcoming archery meeting. I wish I might stay at home : it is my day at the schools. It will be such a large party, and we are to be dressed in costume. I hate costumes. Why cannot we all dress as we choose ? I would go in brown holland. I never should have been in that archery club, but, like everything else, I am made to do it whether I like it or not. Charlotte and Maggie engaged to be in it, and then when it came to the point, Maggie found that it was too much trouble to practise, so, of course, it fell upon me. I protested against it, but papa wondered that I could 'indulge my selfishness,' and requested that I would at once comply ; it was sad that in so small a point as this I could not be obliging. The archery itself I like well enough ; but it is the dress, the company—

no, I am afraid, if I look into my secret heart, it is the having to go with them. It does make me very unhappy when papa and Charlotte say things to me before other people; but, after all, I don't see what good I get by writing about this on Sunday. Let me think about something else.

Papa did preach a splendid sermon this morning. I tried with all my heart to listen, for I think it must be right to listen to the sermon at church on Sunday morning. 'The royalty of right-doing.' The words so often come into my head, and I mean to try after it. Papa's text was: 'Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.' How eloquently he dwelt on the constraining power of love—what it had nerved men to endure; what it had incited them to do; what raptures of enjoyment it had brought them! Then with what power and pathos he dwelt on the sufferings and anguish of martyrs and men of old! I could scarcely keep back the

tears. And when he had wrought his hearers up by his description until they quivered and trembled with a strange sympathy, and were roused to deepest admiration and pity, he drew the anti-climax—that all this suffering, and heroism, and endurance, were nothing—less than nothing—in the sight of God, if there was not along with it that ‘charity which suffereth long and is kind ; which thinketh no evil ; which beareth all things ; believeth all things ; hopeth all things ; endureth all things.’

And then, what a picture he drew of the results which follow from the possession of this charity, or from the want of it ! Truly, he seemed speaking of heaven and hell ! And then, how this charity was to be obtained—by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, through a devout belief in the mediation of our Lord and Saviour ; through constant prayer, watchfulness, fastings, and especially by the grace vouchsafed through the medium of the blessed Sacraments.

That is all that I can remember ; and for a first attempt, I think it is very fair.

I mean to try and listen every Sunday morning ; only I went so red when I recognised texts which papa often quotes at me ! I should be vexed if anyone guessed why I was blushing. I sit exactly facing the gallery. How Mr. Farren did listen to that sermon ! I am sure he must have been delighted. I am glad that papa is such a good preacher. I often think that when he is preaching he looks like those pictures in Gypsie's Sunday book : Elijah expostulating with the priests of Baal ; or Moses, pleading with the wilful congregation of Israel ; or Daniel, calm and grand, kneeling unmoved, with the eastward window open, while fancy pictured the den and the roar of the lions ! There is one of David, but I could never fancy papa like David. When I have read to Gypsie about David, it has always seemed to me that he was so human, so sinning and repentant, so loving and untutored, so impulsive—just saying to

friend or foe what came uppermost—that I think, if I believed the Bible, David would be my favourite character.

The school children behaved well to-day. I could fancy that Mr. Farren has made a difference already, though they never behaved very badly. How could they, just opposite papa? Still, there was a difference to-day, I am sure. There was one curly-headed very little fellow fell fast asleep; he always does every Sunday morning; it used to keep Mr. Morris employed quite half the time of the morning service to keep that child awake; and then the poor little fellow looked so miserable, constantly falling asleep, and constantly being awoke. I wondered if Mr. Farren would take any notice of him, or shake him and pull him, as Mr. Morris used to do. He did take notice of him; for when he saw his head gradually sink lower and lower, until he was only kept in his seat by the boy who sat next him, what did Mr. Farren do but lean towards him, pick him

up like a ball, and gently put him on his own knee; and there Bobbie slept through the whole of the sermon.

I could not help noticing this, though I did try to listen to the sermon; indeed, I did listen all the time, but Gypsie whispered to me, 'Maude, Mr. Farren has put Bobbie on his knee, and he is letting him be fast asleep; put me on your knee, Maude, and let me be fast asleep.'

'Hush, Gypsie,' I whispered; but Gypsie could not 'hush,' with such a sight straight before his eyes; and he grew so urgent, and kept repeating, 'Put me on your knee, Maude, like Mr. Farren has put Bobbie,' until I was obliged to do it, and he fell fast asleep too.

I was sure Charlotte would be angry, but I really could not help it, and, as I expected, she said to me at dinner, 'I really wish, Maude, you would not be so ridiculous as to nurse Gypsie in church.'

'Nurse him!' exclaimed papa, 'I hope you did not act so foolishly and indiscreetly,

Maude ; a due decorum in the house of God, the place where His honour dwells, should be observed even with the youngest child.'

'I only just put him on my knee,' I said, feeling very guilty.

'Only just!' said papa; 'is not that exactly what your sister remonstrated with you for doing.'

'I asked Maude, papa,' said Gypsie.

'There was no harm in that, my dear little boy; it was very natural you should. I am speaking to Maude for not having more discrimination and judgment than to comply with such a thing.'

'There surely was no harm in nursing Gypsie,' I said.

'Your old habit, Maude, of caviling! I am not saying there is harm in nursing Gypsie. What is perfectly right in your own home, may not be suitable in the house of God, "whither the tribes go up to worship." "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient."'

‘Mr. Farren nursed Bobbie,’ said Gypsie, stoutly ; ‘may not Maudie nurse me, papa ?’

Papa coughed. Gypsie had quoted an unexpected precedent.

‘Maude seems to think that no one can do anything for Gypsie but herself,’ said Charlotte ; ‘if you had not put the notion into the child’s head, he would never have thought of such a thing.’

‘I beg your pardon, Charlotte ; Gypsie both thought of it and asked for it.’

‘Make an argument of it,’ said Charlotte, ‘and lose your temper.’

I certainly took Charlotte’s advice, for I exclaimed (oh ! I am so sorry I did ! this was not the ‘royalty of right-doing’), ‘If I did, I should only be doing what you do every day of your life.’

‘Maude,’ said papa, ‘I am grieved and astonished to hear such language from you to your eldest sister. Is this a proper and fitting state of mind for one who has just come from the house of God ; for one who has just

listened to an exposition upon the divine gift of charity ?’

‘ I am afraid Maude did not listen,’ said Charlotte ; ‘ she must have been occupied in observing the conduct of the schoolmaster. Perhaps she thought she could derive more benefit from that than from the sermon.’

‘ I have derived as much benefit apparently, Charlotte, as you have,’ I said, ‘ whatever my occupation has been.’

‘ Maude,’ said papa, in a louder tone, ‘ I am extremely displeased with your ebullition of temper, your persistency in wrong-doing. Is this all you can manifest of the “ meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price ? ” ’

‘ Why don’t you speak to Charlotte, papa ?’ I asked. ‘ She is never in the wrong ; I always am.’

‘ Why can’t you let her alone, Charlotte ?’ said Maggie ; ‘ you began it ; let her nurse Gypsie, if she wishes to. If she likes to be

smothered, let her. I'm sure it's hot enough without making a fuss.'

Gypsie had got up from his seat, and had now both arms round papa's neck. 'I am so sorry, papa dear ; I won't ask Maude again.'

'My darling, you have nothing to be sorry for ; you have done nothing wrong.'

'And Maudie hasn't, dear papa, has she?'

Papa frowned. 'Go back to your seat, my darling ; you have done quite right,' and papa kissed Gypsie's forehead.

Gypsie stopped on his way back to his seat to kiss Charlotte. She returned the kiss with interest, and when he came back beside me he slipped his little hand in mine, and gave me a look which said more than a hundred kisses.

Dear little Gypsie ! Why am I not more like him ? I couldn't have kissed Charlotte, not if I had been trodden under foot the next moment for not doing it. I have an unconquerable aversion to kissing, when my heart does not go with my lips ; it seems to choke

me. I feel as if a strong hand drew me back, and a mocking voice branded me a hypocrite. Heaven knows what it has cost me sometimes to give a kiss when every throb of my heart has opposed it. I never see Gypsie naughty ; I never saw him cross in my life. I—I am sure I have the devil in me sometimes ; I am sure I am possessed ! If they would but be just to me, only just ! How can I help being bitter ? ‘Charity,’—bah ! I will not think about that sermon ! And I did mean this morning to try after the ‘royalty of right-doing.’

CHAPTER V.

Thursday, July 9.

WE went to Caldon Hall yesterday, and the archery meeting was pronounced a great success. We had luncheon in a splendid marquee, and a ball in the evening. I am so glad that it is over. I did beg to go home with Gypsie, when Watson came for him, but papa would not let me, and took the opportunity of taking me aside for a moment to tell me not to let him see any more of these peculiarities, but to try and make myself as little unlike other people as I could. I could not help telling him that I thought I was very like other people that day, as I was dressed in uniform, which speech of course brought upon me a reproof.

There was a large company. Charlotte won the silver arrow, and Mr. Retnor took it down for her. She was in the most extraordinary state of good nature. I never remember anything like it. She was only cross with me four times during the whole of the day, and twice was during the drive home. To win the silver arrow, and Mr. Retnor to seize it from its elevated position and present it to her! I believe she will marry that man!

Maggie looked lovely, and exerted herself so tremendously to flirt, that now her exhaustion is complete; she has scarcely spoken since.

There were a number of officers from the Tenth——now in C——; old friends of Maggie's. What does she find in them so attractive? I never yet talked to an officer who was worth the trouble of talking to. I would rather at any time spend an hour with old Smith, our sexton, than with the tallest man in the service. Their only care in life seems to be to wax the end of their mous-

tachios, drive tandum, and stare at pretty girls through an eye-glass.

I danced every dance. I wonder how that was. I am sure I never expected it. I don't think Charlotte was pleased, but then I could not help it; and I thought if I had to dance, I might as well enjoy it, and try to forget that papa and Charlotte were there. I wish, however, that I had not danced so often with Captain Marshall, for I heard some one talking about it, and I hate that kind of gossip. What right had that old Mrs. Screw-muff to put my name and Captain Marshall's together? I wish people would mind their own business. I had a perfect right to dance with him all evening if I chose.

When we were at home, I actually slipped off to bed with but one reprimand from papa. 'It was scarcely becoming in me to make so much objection to going, and then to enter into the amusement so heartily.' I listened quietly, and then disappeared. I went into Gypsie's room for a look at him. I never in

my life went to bed without a look at Gypsie. He was flushed and hot, and he flung his little arms out when I knelt by him, turned round, and murmured something, and I am sure I caught the word 'Maude.'

If you were to go away, Gypsie ! But then I think papa loves Gypsie so very much, that even he could not bear it. But the difficulty is how is he to be educated. There ! I will not think about it.

Wednesday, July 15.

Gypsie and I have had our day in the woods, and a glorious day it was.

Charlotte and papa went yesterday to spend the day at the Marstons', and we got off as soon as they were gone. I knew they would not be back until ten o'clock, so Gypsie and I did not hurry. We went away into the very heart of Colbeck Woods, taking Pontiff with us for safety. He is such an immense fellow, and carries well, and lets Gypsie ride on his back ; so he was very useful, for our basket

was well filled. Mrs. Carew is decidedly a good housekeeper.

How beautiful the woods were ! Gypsie was buried in ferns high above his curly head, and the thick netted branches overhead saved us from all possibility of a sun-stroke. Aunt Gretta might have been quite happy. How delicious it was to climb up the slippery paths with 'many a fall between;' to stay on the rustic bridges and listen to the brawling streams; to rest on the grass, shut out from all human eyes in those grand solitudes; to scramble down the banks and gather clusters of the pale blue forget-me-not, and make them into a wreath for Gypsie's straw hat; and every now and then to come out upon some open platform and gaze upon a panorama each time more beautiful than the last ! One could see all the central chain of hills in —shire ; undulating, rising, falling, melting away in blue distance ; here and there dotted with white villas, red farm-houses, groves of fir-trees, and sometimes a church steeple or

tower. Then, we stood upon the top of a steep rocky bank, and gazed down a ravine cut out and partially planted with young trees and shrubs, now growing into luxuriance and beauty, for there have been great quarries in this wood, which are now very slightly filled up and planted with flowering shrubs.

At last, we reached the top; and what a view burst upon us! Gypsie gazed awe-struck, and I—I could not help a tear or two falling. We did not speak until Gypsie broke the silence by saying, as he sank upon the grass,—‘Sister Maude, I should like to go to heaven.’

‘Gypsie,’ I said, ‘do not talk in that way.’

‘I should, I should,’ he repeated, very earnestly.

‘Do not, dear Gypsie,’ I said.

‘Maude, this is so pretty, it makes you cry; it will be much prettier in heaven, but you will not cry there.’

‘How do you know I shall not, Gypsie?’

‘Because I have heard papa read it on Sunday, and I have read it myself ; and then if I go to heaven I shall see Mr. Morris’s dear little baby, and I shall tell it that I saw its papa, and that he wants to see it again very much.’

‘But, Gypsie, I could not possibly spare you. What should I do without my Gypsie?’

‘If God wanted me, and told me to come, you’d have to spare me, Maude.’

‘I could not, Gypsie ; I should not know how.’

‘But perhaps if you ask God, He will teach you how, Maude. Will you ask Him?’

‘No, Gypsie, indeed I will not ; God could not be so cruel as to think of your leaving me.’

‘God cannot be cruel, I know. It is only big, rough boys who are cruel, like those boys we saw the other day pulling the flies’ wings off. God is not a big, rough boy ; and if I went to heaven, don’t you think, Maude, that God would take me in His arms

and kiss me, and say, like you, "Dear little Gypsie?"'

'I am sure He would, Gypsie.'

'Then I should like to go very much, Maude. I should like to feel what God's arms are like.'

'No, Gypsie, no,' I said.

'But I should, Maude; wouldn't you? I like to lie in your arms, Maude, and I like you to rock me to sleep, though I am a boy. I should like much better to lie in God's arms, and feel Him rock me to sleep.'

I kissed Gypsie again and again, and then set off to run races with him, and he soon forgot about what he had been talking, and was laughing as merrily as if he had never stood, with his large blue eyes fixed on the scene before him, telling me he would like to feel what 'God's arms were like.'

Then we had our dinner; and, after resting awhile, we rambled on and on, and so spent the afternoon, until we began to descend, stopping half way to have our tea;

viz., strawberries and cream and cake, and taking care to give Pontiff his share. Then Gypsie grew tired, and when we were at the bottom of the wood we sat down to rest on a large stone covered with mosses and lichens, and I could not resist taking him on my knee and singing to him, and he actually fell asleep. I thought then how foolish I had been, and how was I to get him home. I could not carry him, and there was no alternative but awaking him. It seemed so unkind to sing him to sleep and then to arouse him, that I was still hesitating, when he seemed likely to be roused without any trouble on my part. Five or six of the elder village schoolboys came tumbling along the path, and following them, and reading a book he held in his hand, was their master—Mr. Farren.

He seemed amused at seeing me with such a burden on my knee, and after he had passed me he turned back and said, ‘You seem in some perplexity, Miss Maynard; will you allow me to carry your little brother home?’

‘ I should not like to give you the trouble,’
I said.

‘ If you will give me the pleasure,’ he said,
‘ I shall be very glad. Gypsie and I are
already on very good terms.’

‘ Yes,’ I said ; ‘ Gypsie is always on good
terms with everybody.’

‘ In that,’ he said, ‘ he is a most uncommon character, for I have found out already that he has a good deal of character. Since I was at your house, he has come to the schools with Dr. Maynard and claimed my acquaintance.’

‘ Yes, he told me he had been talking to you.’

‘ So I am sure Gypsie will have no objection to my being his bearer, if you have none, and it will save you the necessity of awaking him.’

‘ Thank you,’ I said ; ‘ but you came into the woods with some of your boys ?’

‘ Yes ; but they will do quite as well without me ;’ and as he spoke, Mr. Farren lifted

Gypsie in his arms, and Gypsie, with a little grunt, settled himself as if he had been accustomed to those arms all his life.

‘Gypsie and I have been having a day in the woods,’ I said ; ‘we were disappointed before, so it has been a greater pleasure now.’

‘You believe, then, that disappointments at first, result in greater satisfaction afterwards ?’

‘Well, no—yes ; I think so generally—don’t you ?’

‘I cannot yet answer that question from experience, as I should like to ; but, going from lesser to greater, it follows that those whose life has been all disappointment here, will have one of intensified blessing hereafter.’

‘Do you believe in a hereafter, Mr. Farren ?’

How could I ask such a thing ? How could I, and to the village schoolmaster, a man so greatly my inferior, and about whom

I knew so little? How could I let this stranger see into the deepest and darkest recesses of my most miserable heart? I cannot tell. I was not afraid of saying such a thing, or of hearing what he said to me.

‘Yes,’ he said, ‘I certainly do. This belief is my stronghold, into which the pain of earth drives me for shelter; it is the only key which solves the otherwise unsolvable problems of life; the thought of it is the spur to duty, the antidote to pain, and the rest for weariness. But you—you, I perceive, have only had enough of pain to drive you into the dark caverns of hopelessness and despair; you need more yet to make you emerge on the other side, and feel the sunshine which cannot penetrate the gloom in which you grope.’

For a second I stood still with astonishment. In one minute this man—a poor, working, insignificant schoolmaster—had put into language what I had never dared to do myself. He had told me that I was an un-

believer, and said that I wanted more pain—I, who had been inclined to believe myself a monopolist of that article! and he had spoken with the utmost confidence of being himself somewhere where I had yet to get! Certainly, his words implied that. How had he got to know my secret thoughts, and turned them out in this fashion? I had no reply to make.

‘Look at your little brother,’ he continued; ‘what will become of him when he dies?’

‘He is not going to die,’ I said.

‘That is more than you or I can say; nay, it is not more, for most certainly he *is* going to die. Now, tell me, what will become of him? Annihilation, nothingness, nonentity—what? If so, it is a pity he has been made so fair; he might just as well have been ugly and bad-tempered—detestable. It would have been kinder to make him so; you would not have felt the pain of parting from him for ever nearly so much,

for, according to your belief, you will never see him again.'

'Mr. Farren, how can you talk in this way?'

'But it is truth; you have said what is equivalent to it. You may lie down to sleep any night with the comfortable conviction that soon you will never see Gypsie again. Do you like the prospect?'

'Mr. Farren, do you not need some of the charity about which papa preached on Sunday morning? Was not that a splendid sermon?'

'Pretty well,' he said.

I think this man the most audacious and impertinent that ever breathed. 'Pretty well,' to a sermon that numbers of educated, wealthy, influential men had driven four miles that hot morning to listen to! A scholarly, learned, eloquent discourse; and here was the schoolmaster pronouncing it 'pretty well,' and that commendation qualified by the tone in which it was given. I positively

could make no answer ; his assurance took away my breath.

‘ The sermon did not do you much good,’ he continued, coolly, as he altered Gypsie’s hat, so as to protect the little face from a lingering sunbeam which fell upon it.

‘ Well, upon my word !’ I could not help exclaiming in a tone of unmitigated surprise.

‘ Yes,’ said Mr. Farren, ‘ I perceive you are astonished at what you consider my impertinence ; but again, I am only speaking the truth. However, I have no wish to *appear* impertinent, and, as we are just at the gates, perhaps you will ask one of the servants to come for Gypsie.’

I had no choice, though I longed to ask him what he could possibly mean by saying the sermon had done me no good—the sermon, too, to which I had listened so attentively. He supported his little burden against the gate at the entrance to the flower-garden, evidently with the intention of not going another footstep ; and I thought he did not

intend to speak another word, so I walked in and told James to come out for Gypsie, and Mr. Farren said, 'Good night,' and disappeared as soon as James had taken the child.

I got Aunt Gretta to let me come to bed before papa and Charlotte returned, for I really was tired. Besides, I wanted to think over my conversation with Mr. Farren. What an extraordinary man! The coolness and assurance with which he talked to me! A man who cannot, by possibility, have had any intercourse with good society in his life to say 'Pretty well' to Dr. Maynard's daughter when she asked him if her father's sermon was not splendid. Upon my word! I will know what he meant by saying the sermon did me no good. What a queer ending to our day in the woods! but, on the whole—yes, without a doubt—it certainly was the happiest day I have known for a long time, and I went to sleep thinking of that conversation with Mr. Farren.

CHAPTER VI.

Sunday, July 19.

SUNDAY morning again! This week, or last week I should say, seems to have gone much more quickly than usual. I really think that papa and Charlotte have not been quite the same since Wednesday. That day at Marston Hall must have done them good.

I will try and keep my tongue and temper quiet to-day. I will be on my guard, and when Charlotte is having her class this evening, Gypsie and I will take some flowers to Mrs. Morris's grave. I must not forget my promise to that poor man. There is the bell, and breakfast will be ready in a quarter of an hour, so I must go to Gypsie.

Sunday Evening.

Another grand sermon from papa to-day. His text was : ' Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea.' I wish I were one of these ' little ones ; ' then perhaps, they would be afraid of offending me.

I feel sure it was a splendid sermon, only I cannot, with all my trying, remember anything to put down about it. I could not, for the life of me, help thinking all the time of Mr. Farren's words about the sermon last Sunday not doing me any good. It was the most natural thing in the world I should think of it, for he was, as usual, sitting with the children exactly opposite me, and again he took little Bobbie on his knee, and let him sleep there. Of course, I dared not touch Gypsie ; indeed, the dear little fellow never asked me, though he looked very earnestly at Bobbie.

The children behaved wonderfully well at school to-day. I fancy Mr. Farren understands the secret of keeping them in order a little better than good Mr. Morris did. He certainly understands how to interest them, for Mr. Retnor being engaged (I suppose he had been disappointed of his supply of sermons), Mr. Farren gave them an address, and I never saw children so interested in my life. He has a wonderful gift for interesting children. No wonder Gypsie and he are already such good friends.

In the evening, when papa was out, and Charlotte with her class, and Maggie on the sofa, and Aunt Gretta reading 'Graham's Modern Domestic Medicine,' Gypsie and I gathered a basketful of beautiful flowers, and set off, hand in hand, to Mrs. Morris's grave.

The heart must be a very heavy heart indeed—more than over-burdened with care—it must have lost the very spring and power of re-vivification, or be drearily enduring

until the merciful opiate of an endless blank shall bring relief, if it can find no gratification in the peaceful calm of our English scenery in the quiet of a July Sabbath evening.

Gypsie felt its influence in a strange hush of appreciation, while his eyes took that large, dreamy look, and his steps fell slower and softer, and his little hand clasped mine more tightly, till at last I was constrained to ask, 'What is it, Gypsie?' though I knew quite well what it was. It was the felt presence of beauty—rest, following labour; harmony, putting aside discord; fairness, hiding imperfection; peace, mingling in the air, blending with the sunlight, whispering in the breeze, breathing from the flowers; touching the trees with a fuller green, carpeting the earth with a richer glow, tinting the sky with a deeper blue, and painting the clouds with a lovelier tinge. It was Peace—and this influence found a small entrance into my wayward heart, and, in some little way, laid passion and turmoil to rest.

And so Gypsie and I walked on in silence, only sometimes stopping to listen to the evening anthem from the birds, or a deeper tone of the wind, and we scarcely spoke until we entered the church porch. As we did so, Gypsie stopped a moment, and read aloud the words carved there in quaint old characters : ' I am the Resurrection and the Life.'

I wonder what made Gypsie do that. I wonder still more what made the words enter my heart. I assented to them ; I believed in them ; nay, I rejoiced in them. For a moment the great Hereafter was a truth to me, a mighty fact, an overwhelming reality. I did not cavil ; I did not complain ; I did not halt. That hour in the churchyard last night was the happiest hour I have yet known. Ah ! if it would have lasted. Will it ever come again ?

Gypsie and I laid the flowers on Mrs. Morris's grave. I should think Mr. Morris must have spent all he had on that monument. Poor man ! as if it made any differ-

ence. What does it matter whether she were buried in the loneliest isle of the Pacific, or the deepest depths of the Atlantic, or the dreariest height of the Andes? 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.' Yes, it did matter. The depths of love must now and then have some flow, or they will break the barrier, and the poor human vessel will be engulfed. Mr. Morris fulfilled a necessity of his nature when he gave his all to do what human longing could do for the dead. It was the poor, but only expression in his power of, 'Would God I had died for thee!'

I was thinking of the human heart, of its weakness, its powerlessness, its utter feebleness, as contrasted with its will, its desires, its longings, when Gypsie, who had at last arranged and re-arranged the flowers to his satisfaction, suddenly seemed to throw off the influence of the scene, and bounded from my side, and when I looked at him, he had his hand in that of Mr. Farren.

They were coming towards me. I went

to meet them. There is a path through the churchyard to the village, a shorter way than going round. Mr. Farren had been going along this path, and I did not know that he would like Gypsie to interrupt him, so I put out my hand for Gypsie to come back to me, but Gypsie did not come.

‘I am interrupting you, I am afraid,’ said Mr. Farren, lifting his hat; ‘Gypsie must be my apology; his wishes, I believe, are law with everyone.’

‘Yes; no one ever thinks of refusing him anything.’

Gypsie had drawn Mr. Farren to the side of the grave. ‘Mr. Farren,’ he said, ‘poor Mrs. Morris and her little baby lie here; they died, so they were put here. I asked God if He would let the baby come back for a little time, and my white rabbit too, but God has not let them yet; perhaps He may soon, because the baby’s papa wanted so much to see it; so I mean to go on asking God.’

‘I would not, if I were you, Gypsie,’ said Mr. Farren.

‘Would you not?’ and Gypsie opened his eyes very wide. ‘Why would you not, Mr. Farren? Maude said I might, and that perhaps God would send them.’

Mr. Farren looked at me. I believe I blushed, and said something about ‘generally assenting to all that Gypsie said; it saved trouble, and he might as well believe it as not.’

Mr. Farren gravely listened until I had finished, and seemed to wait afterwards as if he were expecting something more, but I had nothing more to say. I only felt that I was getting redder and redder.

‘Gypsie,’ he said, ‘God loves to hear you pray to Him, and He likes to send you what you ask for; but there are some things He will never send you, any more than your Aunt Gretta would give you a cup of scalding milk to drink because you asked again and again for it.’

‘ But I wonder why God hasn’t sent them yet ?’ said Gypsie. ‘ I think perhaps He must have been so busy, you know, He hasn’t had time ; He’ll have some more time p’raps by-and-by, and then p’raps He’ll do it.’

‘ But, Gypsie, if you ask as often as you can, God will not send back either the baby or the rabbit.’

Gypsie’s rosy mouth quivered, and a shadow came over his bright little face, and the blue eyes filled with big tears.

‘ Then I think God is quite unkind, I do ; and I don’t think the baby can be happy with Him, or my white rabbit either. I wish I had it back again, I do. I was always kind to it.’

‘ And God is always kind,’ said Mr. Farren ; ‘ if He were not, He would not have taken the baby, nor would He keep it now. God knew the baby would be far happier up there than here ; that is why He took it ; that is why He keeps it. Do you see how beautiful that sky is, Gypsie, where God is ? and

where He has taken the baby to is far more beautiful, and the baby is quite happy, and would not at all like to come back. God took it up there at once when it died.'

'*That* is heaven,' said Gypsie; 'I know that. How long, Mr. Farren, would it have to stay here before God told it to get up and go to Him?'

'It would not have to stay at all; it went at once; only the body which God gave it was left here.'

'It was left here for us to put flowers over,' said Gypsie, confidentially. 'Sister Maude told Mr. Morris that she would, and Maude always does what she says she will. We shall come every Sunday evening and put flowers here; will you come too, Mr. Farren?'

'I think not,' said Mr. Farren.

Gypsie was thrown back; it was the newest thing in the world to him to have a request refused; he could not understand it, but he did not press the matter—a word is

always enough for him. He was quite silent a moment, and then he began again.

‘ If God is so very good, why did He let Mr. Morris cry so much and be so very sad ?’

‘ Did he cry much ? Did you see him ?’

‘ I didn’t see him ; big men never let little boys see them cry ; but I know he did, because—because—I know he did,’ concluded Gypsie, unable to find a logical reason for the strong impression he had received of Mr. Morris’s grief ; ‘ and why did God let him ?’

‘ Do you remember, Gypsie, one day last week, when you came with your papa to the schools, telling me a long tale about Pontiff getting a thorn into his foot, and how lame he was for days, and what trouble James had to get it out, and how much it hurt Pontiff, and how he tried not to let James touch his foot ?’

‘ I did not tell you a long tale,’ said Gypsie, fixing upon the word in Mr. Farren’s question which had offended his ear.

‘ Do you remember telling me a short and

very interesting tale ?' said Mr. Farren, with perfect gravity.

'Yes, I do remember that,' said Gypsie, with dignity.

'So do I,' said Mr. Farren. 'Would it not have been very unkind of James if he had let Pontiff's foot alone, just because it pained him to have it touched ? If James had not taken the thorn out, the pain would have got much worse ; the pain Pontiff had then saved him from pain afterwards, and James knew it was better for him to have it.'

'Yes,' said Gypsie, wonderingly.

'It gave Mr. Morris great pain to lose his wife and baby ; it gave Pontiff great pain to have his foot examined. God saw that the pain would be good for Mr. Morris ; James saw that the pain would be good for Pontiff. Pontiff would be very glad when it was over, and he was quite well again, and knew why it had been done. Mr. Morris will be very glad when it is all over, and he knows why it has been done.'

‘ Does he know now ? ’ asked Gypsy.

‘ No, not now ; he will some day.’

‘ Who will tell him ? ’

‘ God.’

‘ When ? ’

‘ Some day, I cannot tell you what day.’

‘ To-morrow, Mr. Farren ? do you think God will tell Mr. Morris to-morrow ? ’

‘ I think not.’

‘ But when ? ’

‘ I cannot tell you *when*, Gypsy, only I know that He will.’

‘ I wish then He’d be quick,’ said Gypsy ;
‘ don’t you think He’s rather slow, Mr. Farren ? ’

‘ No, I do not, Gypsy.’

‘ I do,’ said Gypsy ; ‘ and I think Mr. Morris does. Mr. Farren, may I ask God to hurry a little and tell Mr. Morris ? ’

‘ Yes, I think you might, Gypsy.’

‘ And God would do that, would He, if I asked Him ? ’

‘ I think perhaps He would.’

‘How would He do it, Mr. Farren? Would He call Mr. Morris up to heaven, and tell him, and then send Him down again to teach the boys?’

‘No, Gypsie; I think God would not do that, because when people once go to heaven they never come down again; but He might whisper all about it into Mr. Morris’s heart, then Mr. Morris would be satisfied.’

‘Yes,’ said Gypsie; ‘I do think perhaps God might do that, because He sometimes whispers to me, and then I am satisfied.’

‘When does God whisper to you, Gypsie?’

‘Sometimes. He whispers sometimes at night after Maude has kissed me and gone; He whispered to me as we came here to-night; He whispered to me when we were at the top of Colbeck Woods on Tuesday. I often hear Him, I do.’

‘What did He say, Gypsie?’

‘Different things.’

‘Tell me one. What did He say on Tuesday?’

“ Gypsie, I am God. I live in heaven ; I love you ; you shall see me some day soon.” ’

There was a silence ; Mr. Farren broke it—‘ Gypsie, help me to arrange these flowers ; we will put them differently ; ’ and Mr. Farren had altered every one before they finished, and Gypsie, in the interest of re-arranging them, had soon forgotten the conversation ; and then Mr. Farren began telling him a tale about some boys—a tale which made Gypsie laugh heartily, and as we turned to leave the churchyard, he was looking as if there had never been a serious thought in his head.

Part of the way to the rectory from the churchyard is also part of the way to the school-house, and Mr. Farren went along with us, finishing the story as he went. When he had done, he showed Gypsie some wild flowers in the hedge, and as Gypsie ran to gather them, Mr. Farren said to me—

‘ Do you believe that Gypsie will one day see God, Miss Maynard ? ’

I hesitated, and did not speak.

‘If it should be so, you will too—that is certain.’

‘Yes.’

He said no more, and I knew he would turn off in three minutes down the lane to the school-house. I was determined to speak: ‘Mr. Farren, will you tell me what you meant when you said, the other day, that you were sure papa’s sermon did me no good?’

‘I did not say I was sure, did I?’

‘You said you thought so.’

‘Yes.’

‘Why do you think so?’

‘It is difficult always to give a reason for our thoughts,’ he said.

‘But you had some reason for thinking so?’

‘I judged partly by what I have seen of you, and heard you say; by what I have noticed of you in church—by many things. I think you were trying to listen to that ser-

mon, because you thought it was your duty to listen ; you had no enjoyment in so doing, except the enjoyment of feeling that such a finished, scholarly discourse denoted that your father was a man pre-eminent in talent and education. Am I not right ?’

‘ Yes ; tell me some more.’

‘ There was some secret cause at work—I do not yet know what it was—which effectually prevented you from deriving any real benefit from the sermon : every now and then some allusion had some particular influence over you ; it gave you great pain, it caused your brow to contract, your eyes to droop, and even as much as your lips to quiver ; and these symptoms were restrained from becoming more than symptoms by a keener emotion. I cannot say what that emotion was, unless it was a deep sense of justice which revolted, and a painfully hurt self-respect. I do not know. I must go now. My path lies in this direction, yours in that. Good evening, Miss Maynard.’

‘ Good evening,’ I said.

And he went. When Gypsie came running to me next time, I was alone.

‘ Where is Mr. Farren ?’ he asked, in a disappointed tone.

‘ Gone home, I suppose, Gypsie ; he turned down the lane leading to his own house.’

‘ Gone home ! and I had just gathered these flowers for him. Why did he not come with us and stay supper, as Mr. Retnor does ?’

‘ I did not ask him, Gypsie ; and if I had done, he would not have come.’

‘ Why, Maude ?’

‘ Mr. Retnor is a friend of ours, and a clergyman.’

‘ And is not Mr. Farren a friend of ours ?’

‘ Well, no—not exactly.’

‘ What is he, then, Maude ?’

‘ He is only the teacher.’

‘ And Mr. Retnor teaches, and papa teaches, don’t they, Maude ? only they teach

big people in the church, and Mr. Farren teaches little boys in the school. Aren't little boys as nice to teach as big people, Maude ?'

'A great deal nicer,' I said, kissing him.

'Will you ask him to come to supper, next time, Maude ?'

'I can't, Gypsie.'

'Why can't you ?'

'It—it—perhaps it might not be convenient to Aunt Gretta, you know.' My *équivoque* brought its own punishment.

'I will ask Aunt Gretta,' said Gypsie, quickly, 'and then we shall know for another time.'

'Oh no, Gypsie,' I said quickly, 'you must not. Do you understand, Gypsie ? I do not wish you to do so.'

'Why, Maude ?' and Gypsie raised his large, waiting blue eyes to mine.

'Just because I don't wish you ; will you promise me, Gypsie, not to say anything more about it ?'

‘Very well, Maude.’

‘Gypsie,’ I said, when we came to the gate, ‘we have been out such a long time ; will you go to bed at once when we get in ?’

‘If you wish me, Maude ;’ but Gypsie could not help a little look of disappointment coming into his face. He sometimes sits up to supper on Sunday night.

He went in and kissed Aunt Gretta and Maggie, without a word ; and I sent Baines away, and put him to bed myself, and then sang him to sleep.

What a strange Sunday this has been ; but what a happy one !

CHAPTER VII.

Wednesday, August 4.

WE are going to Scarborough next month. I think I never disliked the idea so much. I suppose it is the thought of leaving home ; and yet we have always gone away for six weeks or two months, in the summer ; two or three times we have stayed three months, and I have been glad to be away. I wonder why I dislike it so much more than usual this time ?

I have not been able to write lately, we have had so much company ; the officers from C—— are constantly driving over and lunching or dining with us. I wish they would not come so often—except for Maggie's sake—it gives her pleasure ; and why should she not have all the pleasure she can ? She is growing quite animated. I am glad she is happy.

But I very much dislike Captain Marshall coming so much ; somehow or other, I always seem to be with him. At lunch, or riding, or archery, it always happens so ; of course, it cannot *always* be chance, and I am really afraid that he does it on purpose. I used to think a little time ago that I would marry anyone, no matter who he was, who would take me away from here, except, of course, Mr. Retnor ; from the very first, I could not bear him. But Captain Marshall is different ; he is gentlemanly, kind, well-educated, and agreeable. What am I saying ? My opinion of officers must have altered very much. I used to hate them ; but then, I think, I hated everybody. I am sure I feel different ; I believe I am growing kinder, more tolerant, less bad-tempered, less irritable. I believe I am learning a little to bear unjust reproof. When it is over, I get out into the garden and think about—oh, anything that is pleasant and makes me forget it.

There is another thing. I have begun

to say a few words of prayer before I get into bed ; at least, I have a book, and repeat a few words of prayer from it. I wonder how long it is since I have prayed before ? I blush to think ! But how could I, with this dark hopelessness of God, or truth, or right in the world ? Since that night—that night in the churchyard, I have begun to pray. It is true, I only say it, but perhaps it does me good ; who knows ?

I am troubled about Gypsie. Papa still talks of school for him ; indeed, there seems nothing else ; he must be educated ; he will be six years old next October. Papa is quite distressed at the idea of his not having regular lessons, and yet he could not manage to teach him himself. Anyone can see that in a moment. Papa can write splendid sermons, and argue, and talk, and quote, and do all that kind of thing, but he could never teach a little child. He is critically skilled in Greek and Latin, and no mean scholar, I believe, in Sanscrit, and Hebrew, and Arabic, and I do not

know how many modern languages ; but he would not have the least idea how to set about putting Gypsie on the road to the same learning. Besides, he has abundance of work on his hands. Sermons and treatises, pastoral and magisterial work, archeological and antiquarian researches, and all kinds of things of which I do not even know the name. And papa will never have a tutor in the house. How I wish some plan could be devised. Could not papa pick up some grisly, ossified, withered, scraggy-looking old Mentor, who regarded women generally as mighty blunders ? I have heard of such men. But what am I saying ? What a teacher for Gypsie I am picturing ! And also, were the most unsightly pedagogue that ever dimmed his sight, bleached his hair, and lost his senses over Latin and Greek roots—were such a man to be found, and come to Stonecross Hall, I would wager all the new dresses which Aunt Gretta, is getting ready for Scarborough, that, by some means or other, Maggie would flirt with him.

But she is pretty well engaged just now ; and *apropos* of this, there is the sound of horses' hoofs ; those officers again ! What a good thing it will be when the Tenth —— leaves C——. I must go, or Aunt Gretta will send for me. I did want a little quiet time to think and write ; we seem to have been in such a constant bustle lately with having so much company.

Sunday, August 29.

Our last Sunday at home for six weeks. I hope it will be a happy one. I never try now to force myself to listen to the sermon, so I have nothing but enjoyment at church. The quiet, the feeling that I shall be left alone for two hours at least, no misunderstandings, no apprehensive fear—it is rest. Then there is one prayer which, wicked as I am, I really do love. It seems to me that my heart, with all its burden, lays itself down in that prayer. Whatever I am thinking about, those words arrest me, and I often find myself unconsciously repeating :—‘ By Thine Agony and

bloody sweat ; by thy Cross and Passion ; by Thy precious Death and Burial ; Good Lord, deliver us.'

And I like, too—I like to spell out letter by letter those words on the monument of Carrara marble, between the two windows nearest our pew. I do this every Sunday morning, and then I turn to my Prayer-book, and surreptitiously read those words, 'And we also bless Thy holy name for all Thy servants departed this life in Thy faith and fear, beseeching Thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples that with them we maybe partakers of Thy heavenly kingdom.' If ever I wish I were a Christian, it is when I read those words !

There are but four words on that white marble monument. These are the words : 'Isabel, Marianne, Madeleine Maynard.'

Nothing more. And yet, it is such a splendid monument. I once heard Dr. Vauny say, in talking about mamma, that on her death-bed she made papa promise that

he would not have one word put, but her name. I wonder, I have often wondered, what made her ask this.

Sunday Night.

I see I wrote this morning that I hoped to-day would be a happy Sunday, and it has been—not happy at all—for Captain Marshall drove over this morning and went to church with us. I wish he would not have sat in that corner exactly opposite me at church ; it was stupid of him ; nobody ever thinks of sitting there. I could not see the school children at all without edging to one side or other of my *vis-a-vis*, and I did not like to do that.

When we came out of church, we turned to go home by the fields ; it was such a lovely morning ; but I did not enjoy it.

‘What a pleasant walk!’ began Captain Marshall. ‘Dear, how delightful! This is charming, to be sure!’

He would have made precisely the same remarks had we been walking over a cinder-

path, past dirty hovels, and in the mirky atmosphere of a November day. However, there was truth in what he said ; it was delightful this August morning ; so I assented, I hope without any of what Charlotte calls my ‘ tartness.’

‘ Charming old church !’ continued Captain Marshall ; ‘ and, by George ! what a sermon ! Dr. Maynard beats any other preacher I have ever heard into fits. I never listened to such a sermon in my life, Miss Maude. It did me good ; upon my word and soul it did.’

‘ Can you tell me the text ?’ I said.

This was a poser. The citadel was surprised and the enemy attacked unawares. Captain Marshall blushed to the very roots of his hair, and stammered, ‘ Upon my word ! Ah, really ! I really, I—I don’t exactly remember it just now—just at this moment, but I assure you, I did know. I paid the very greatest attention.’

‘ Then can’t you remember the text,’ I said, grimly.

It was too bad. I know it was ; but I did want to learn the extent of Captain Marshall's Biblical knowledge, and I was soon satisfied.

‘ I think,’ he said, with some slight hesitation, ‘ I think, if I am not mistaken, it was out of the—the—the Second Book of Psalms, was it not, Miss Maude? (hang it, *is* there a Second Book of Psalms ?)’ This was *sotto voce*, as he caught a glimpse of my face. ‘ Now, Miss Maude, it's too bad ! You are laughing at me. If you had asked me to describe the line of fortifications at a siege, or the order of battle during a campaign, or even the names of the sick in our hospital, I could have told you, on my honour I could, as well as any man in ours. But to come down on a fellow for the text, and that when he has been thinking of something else all the time !’

‘ But you told me you were paying the very greatest attention.’

‘ Well, I was when I was not thinking of something else.’

‘ That is honest, for a moment since you

said you *were* thinking of something else all the time.'

'Did I? You take me up so sharply, Miss Maude! I must be careful of what I say; one doesn't stay to consider every word when one talks to ladies.'

'It appears not.'

'You never would get on if you did,' continued the Captain, 'and they would not like it either.'

'Would they not?'

'No; I am sure the generality would not. A fellow must out with what is uppermost, or he might as well say nothing at all.'

'Which in some cases would be a great deal better,' I said.

'Perhaps it might,' said Captain Marshall, not at all put out by my pettish curtness; 'though a good many of us would have to shut up altogether. If we had to consider whether everything we said was just what it ought to be, we should not get three speeches made from sun-rising to sun-setting.'

‘But if they were three sensible speeches, they would be better than a hundred foolish ones.’

‘That depends upon taste,’ said the Captain, stoutly. ‘I think, though I daresay I don’t know how to put it rightly, but I think there is a fitness even in such things as talking: one wouldn’t begin to talk to a lady about barracks and orders and measurement and rations, or about matters we discuss at the mess-table. Nor would one begin to talk in a ball-room about war and the sick and the wounded. As I say, I think there’s a fitness in things, and to put wise speeches into silly people’s mouths at wrong times would only make them look like the frog striving to be as large as the ox.’

‘Very true,’ I said, amused at his way of putting it; ‘and as you and I are neither of us wise people, we must be content to listen and learn when others are talking.’

‘I don’t know about that,’ said Captain Marshall. ‘I like talking to you because I

always go away feeling a better man, and I think one ought to do the best one can to be made a better man, especially on Sundays. I don't wonder at people who live in a place like this being good ; but how can anyone be, in the din and noise and babble in which our fellows spend their evenings ? If ever I marry, I shall sell out.'

'And be a coward,' I said.

Captain Marshall looked very much surprised. '*What* did you say ?' he asked.

'I beg your pardon,' I said ; 'never mind, it was nothing. I am too apt when I am not on my guard to speak out what comes uppermost.'

He smiled. 'Then *you* don't always stay to consider beforehand what you should say. But I do mind, Miss Maude ; I want to know what you said.'

'I said, "And be a coward."''

'Why, do you think I am *that* ?' he asked, in the greatest surprise, and again reddening

furiously. 'If I believed you really thought that, I would go and hang myself.'

'And be a greater coward still,' I said.

'Well,' he said, 'I can't understand you in the least. I should have thought that a woman would have been grateful to a man for his being willing to hang himself rather than live to have her bad opinion.'

'I don't feel grateful at all,' I said. 'In the first place, I am quite aware that did I express the most humiliating opinion about you, you would never for one moment entertain the faintest idea of hanging yourself; and, also, I cannot imagine any woman deriving the least gratification from the fact of a gallant captain preferring to dangle in his dressing-gown and slippers by a piece of hemp from his bed-post instead of rushing at the call of duty to meet his fate in the fore-front of battle.'

'Bless my soul!' cried Captain Marshall; 'but you take it up so seriously, Miss Maude, and put it so strongly!'

I hope he felt silly; he looked so; and I

don't think he will talk to me about hanging himself again.

‘Depend upon it,’ I said, ‘life, with the prospect of “broad ancestral lands,” has too many attractions for Captain Marshall for him to be troubled about anyone’s bad opinion of him, especially when he does not deserve it.’

‘Well, life *has* a great many attractions just now, I confess,’ he said, with a sigh, which evidently was meant to sound as if it came from his heart; if so, his heart must have been very near his mouth—perhaps it was just then.

It was now my turn to look rather silly, which I did, to my heart’s content, and wished for the tenth time that morning, that Captain Marshall had stayed to hear prayers read at the Barracks Chapel rather than drive over to Stonecross.

‘You don’t really think me a coward, do you, Miss Maude?’ he asked, when he had finished sighing.

‘Of course, I don’t,’ I said. ‘At least, I have never thought anything about you.’

‘A-hem !—but—I wish, you know—upon my honour—I wish you would think about me sometimes—just sometimes, you know.’

Captain Marshall tried to look sentimental, but it would not do. Nothing more unsentimental than his face can be imagined. A fair Saxon physiognomy : features, well-shaped and cast by Nature in a firm mould ; a mouth pliable, easily moved, and denoting a temperament which lacked decision, and was readily swayed ; a deep blue eye, varying, changeful, quick, easily dimmed or easily brightened ; a colour that came and went like a boy’s ; the whole surmounted by a profusion of light brown curling hair, tossed into order rather than arranged, and always being put into disorder by the restless movement of his hands—those hands being aristocratic, well-shaped, and beautifully kept ; but hands, nerveless rather than nervous ; flexible, languid, drooping, unless suddenly empowered by some ex-

traneous energy or fire, foreign to his own character ; hands that were fitter to be clasped than to clasp ; to be led rather than lead ; hands, which if they fell into other good ones, might be made useful, honourable, working hands, but otherwise might be marred by unholy touch and sin-defiled by unworthy contact. His figure denoted the same ; upright and well-made, habit and temperament had given him the air of a man who lacked energy and decision ; a man who needed an anchor, who was ready to take advantage of any gale that might blow, and so be wafted hither and thither, and finally—stranded or safely harboured ? Heaven knows.

I thought all this in the moment I looked at him, and I forgot how fixedly I did look at him in that moment.

‘ Well,’ he said, and he had grown very red under my gaze, ‘ well, Miss Maude, what is your report ? Not an “ evil one,” I hope. You see now I do know something about the Bible. I believe I heard every word of the

First Lesson this morning. Don't be like the spies and give an evil report, though it may not be a land flowing with "milk and honey."'

'I believe it might be made a good land,' I almost involuntarily said, with a smile.

'Hang it! I am sure it might,' he exclaimed, 'if only you would undertake it.'

I was at a loss for a reply sufficiently foolish to convince Captain Marshall that I took all he said in jest, and, happily, we were just at home; and before we reached the hall door my companion stopped. I observed that his countenance had changed, and instead of looking exultant, as he had done when I announced my opinion of the 'land,' he looked very crestfallen.

'Miss Maude,' he began.

'Well, Captain Marshall,' I said.

'On my honour,' he said, 'I am not quite sure how I shall get through dinner.'

'Are you not well?' I was bound in courtesy to ask.

‘Oh, yes—yes,’ he said, ‘as serene as the sky; but I mean—that is—your father, you know, Dr. Maynard.’

‘Well?’ I said.

‘Don’t you understand me?’ he said.

‘No, indeed,’ I said. ‘I don’t know who could.’

‘I know I’m very stupid,’ he said, apologetically. ‘But you see, Miss Maude, being Sunday, there’s no knowing what the governor—I beg your pardon, I mean what Dr. Maynard—might take it into his head to say to me at dinner-time; you know, I should not like to lose caste with him, and on my word of honour I don’t know in the least what the sermon was about. Do you think he’ll question me?’

I could not help laughing. ‘Why, of course he won’t,’ I said. ‘What an idea!’

‘Oh, thank you! I am so relieved! You see I have never been here on Sunday before, and I didn’t know what the—what Dr. Maynard might think it proper to do.

I hold him in the greatest possible respect, but he's so confoundedly clever, I don't feel quite at home with him like you do.'

Like I do! I ran indoors and up to my room, leaving Gypsie to pilot the Captain into the drawing-room.

Captain Marshall took Aunt Gretta into the dining-room in due form, but before he took his seat at her right hand, he managed to whisper to me, 'Don't let me put my foot into it, Miss Maude.'

As soon as we were all seated, and grace had been said, papa turned to his guest.

'Well, Captain Marshall, what do you think of our church, our chanting, our manner of conducting the sublime and impressive Liturgical Service? I believe this is the first time we have had the pleasure of seeing you in Stonecross Church; I trust it may not be the last; that is, if you have found this morning's service conducive to your spiritual edification, as well as gratifying to your educated and intellectual tastes.'

Captain Marshall looked dumbfounded. I am convinced a roar of cannon at his ear would have been the greatest possible relief. He had not the faintest idea of what papa had said, or a notion of what he ought to say in reply, and in his distress he looked piteously at me. To my infinite relief, Aunt Gretta took advantage of the pause.

‘I hope you did not feel any draught, Captain Marshall,’ she said. ‘I am not quite sure, I have never been able to decide positively whether or not our pew is quite free from draughts. I hope you did not find a draught where you sat?’

‘I beg pardon—a what? I found myself amazingly comfortable and delighted.’

‘Dear me! I’m very glad, I’m sure,’ said Aunt Gretta. ‘I was afraid you would find the heat very inconvenient; it comes through the window near our pew with great power.’

‘I was exceedingly comfortable,’ said Captain Marshall.

‘I’m sure it’s very good of you to drive such a distance on such an awfully hot day,’ said Maggie.

‘I did not feel at all hot,’ said the gallant Captain. ‘I felt a delightful breeze.’

‘I wish we could feel it now,’ said Charlotte, rather shortly.

Captain Marshall looked a little confused.

‘The best way is to take the weather as one finds it,’ remarked Mr. Retnor. ‘If people give way to their fancies and feelings, there is no end to it. Some people can’t go to church because it’s too hot, others because it’s too cold; some because it’s too dry, and others because it’s too wet. I have no patience with such whims.’

If this speech were meant for Maggie’s edification, it was lost upon her. Her thoughts had wandered to the barracks at C——, long before Mr. Retnor had finished speaking.

‘Where is Captain Snuffins to-day?’ she asked.

‘He’s off into the country to spend the

day with three or four others,' said Captain Marshall, 'or he would have joined me; a prior engagement, Miss Margaret, an urgent one, was the only thing which prevented him coming.'

It was very good-naturedly done, no doubt, of Captain Marshall, but it was not exactly the truth, for he had informed me on our way to church that he had left Captain Snuffins 'soaking in bed,' and could not get him out at the 'point of his sword.' It never occurred to our guest that he was telling a *lie*; such a paltry matter as that wasn't worth lying about. He would have stood to be shot at rather than lie to his colonel on any matter connected with his regiment, and he would have fought a duel, without hesitation, with any brother-officer who had called him a liar; but this was nothing at all. Captain Marshall swallowed his wine, and ate his dinner, and laughed and chatted without thinking about the matter another second; he had said what came uppermost to keep

his friend, Captain Snuffins, in Miss Margaret Maynard's good graces. A very kind fellow and a true-born gentleman was Captain Marshall.

'I have not yet,' said papa, 'had an opportunity of hearing what Captain Marshall thinks of our manner of conducting the service of our beloved church. I should like his opinion as to our chanting, our congregation, our probable influence as a church, the views we advocate, the doctrines we disseminate, the principles we preach : it is well at all times to remember the injunction to have our conversation "seasoned with salt," especially upon the Sabbath day.'

Captain Marshall looked as if he would much have preferred to endure the process bodily of being 'seasoned with salt' rather than be obliged to have his conversation so seasoned. Again he looked at me, but what could I say ? For my very life I dared not interrupt, and at length, in desperation, he stammered out, 'I think, sir—I think it was

all very fine ; really, remarkably so ; but I am afraid I didn't understand it all as I ought to have done.'

Papa coughed. His guest was evidently not in that state of grace in which he ought to have been, after listening to the morning's discourse. Whether he could be brought into it by entering into an argument, or whether courteousness bade his host pass it over, seemed to be the question papa pondered. I broke in :

' Did you observe the school, Captain Marshall ? ' (How could he, when he sat with his back to it ?)

' The school ? ' he said ; ' what school ? '

' Our Sunday-school, sir,' said Mr. Retnor ; ' my Sunday-school and Miss Maynard's, I may say ; a sight, sir, for any clergyman to show with pleasure, and any hearer to see with profit. There is no Sunday-school equal to it in any parish in the country. The pains Miss Maynard and I have be-

stowed upon our schools—Sunday and day schools—no one can calculate.’

‘Dear me!’ said Captain Marshall; ‘I am sure it is very good of you.’

‘There is nothing like working yourself, sir,’ continued Mr. Retnor, still more loudly; ‘take my advice, Captain Marshall, and whatever you want doing, let it be done under your own eye.’

‘But what’s the good of that?’ said the Captain. ‘There’s no use in having servants, if you are to be ever after them. What a confounded deal of trouble you would make for a man, Mr. Retnor.’

‘The only way, sir, the only way. If I did not see after everything myself—I and Miss Maynard—I mean, of course, leaving general supervision to our esteemed Rector, what would become of everything?’

A profound question, the answer to which would involve a calculation to which Captain Marshall was not at all equal.

‘Really, I don’t know,’ he said.

‘Of course, you don’t, sir,’ proceeded the curate, in a louder voice; ‘of course you don’t; who could? I’ll trouble you for that decanter, Miss Maude.’

‘I trust,’ said papa, ‘that we all remember that “Paul may plant and Apollos water, but it is God that giveth the increase.”’

‘Very nice, I’m sure,’ murmured Captain Marshall; ‘is it a quotation? Fancy I have heard it somewhere before.’

Papa looked scandalised, and Mr. Retnor almost shouted, ‘There is not a boy in our Sunday-school, or a girl either, I’ll warrant, who could not tell without thinking where those words are.’

I thought Mr. Retnor as rude as usual, and I remarked that it was a pity the children should be taught to speak without thinking.

‘I extremely disapprove, Maude,’ said papa, ‘of a bad habit, in which you indulge, of talking lightly on the most serious subjects; it is a habit extremely to be depre-

cated, and one which I have often warned you against. "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life ; but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit."'

'Maude is so very sharp,' said Charlotte, with a sneer ; 'it would be a pity to deprive us all of the pleasure of hearing how witty she can be.'

'Such a habit,' continued papa, 'originates in a frivolous, vacant, and unbecoming frame of mind—a frame of mind which you would do well to strive against, Maude ; we are to "strive against the sin which doth most easily beset us."'

I said nothing ; but I blushed to the ears at being reproved before Captain Marshall. I was more afraid of his pity than anything else about him. He looked as if he were in a Scotch mist. "What is the matter ?" he said ; 'is anything the matter ?'

'I hope not,' said Aunt Gretta. 'If you on't feel well, Maude, my dear——'

'I am quite well, thank you,' I said.

‘I dare say she feels the heat,’ said Aunt Gretta, apologetically ; ‘Maude always does feel the heat.’

‘Who doesn’t?’ said Maggie. ‘I don’t think anyone feels it half as much as I do.’

‘Of course not,’ said Charlotte ; ‘no one ever does feel anything half as much as you do.’

‘You should rouse yourself, and do a little more work, Miss Margaret,’ said Mr. Retnor. ‘Excuse me, but you know I am a privileged person. I assure you, you would find it the most refreshing state both for body and soul.’

‘I wish you would not talk about work,’ said Maggie, pettishly ; ‘it’s work, work, work with you and Charlotte from morning till night. Whatever is the use of always working and always talking about it? You’ll work until there is nothing left for anyone else to do.’

‘Which will be a happy state of things for you,’ said Charlotte.

‘Maggie is not strong, and could not

bear much,' said Aunt Gretta. 'I wish I could persuade her to take the white of an egg, beaten up, twice a day; it is such an excellent thing.'

'The devil tempts an idle man, but a busy man tempts the devil,' said Mr. Retnor, with a tone and manner worthy of a mob orator. 'If I see a man only eating his dinner, I like to see him do it in earnest, and as if he meant business.'

No one contradicted Mr. Retnor's statement. It was evident that he often gave himself and others a treat.

'I have to work, whether I like it or not,' said Captain Marshall; 'for my man will get so confoundedly drunk sometimes, that there's the very deuce to pay. I beg ten thousand pardons, Dr. Maynard; but it is a fact that the fellow lies drunk many a time, while his master does his work for him.'

'Then his master is a great simpleton,' said Mr. Retnor. 'Excuse me, Captain Marshall, but do you mean to tell me that you

let your man lie drunk while you do his work ? ’

‘ I can’t help it,’ said the Captain. ‘ What am I to do if he will drink ? ’

‘ To do, sir ? Turn him out by the shoulders, and let him starve in the street.’

‘ My dear sir ! A gentleman could not do that ! ’

‘ Why not, sir ? A gentleman can do his duty, I presume.’

‘ If it be not too disagreeable,’ said Captain Marshall, shrugging his shoulders. ‘ But to turn a poor fellow into the street, just because he forgets himself sometimes ! Why, your Bible does not teach you that, sir, does it ? ’

‘ Sir ! ’ interrupted papa, as if such a question could be put to none other than himself—the proficient in Oriental languages—‘ Sir, our Bible teaches us to give no license to sin, to show no quarter to iniquity, to harbour no curse, to give place—no, not for an hour—to what is wrong, foul, hateful, and otherwise to be deplored and avoided. I regret much that

any man of large means and influence should allow himself, in a case of flagrant sin, for one moment to be swayed by a maudlin charity and a sentimental weakness, not becoming a brave man.'

Captain Marshall knew not what to say. His conscience had never represented his good-natured and patient endurance of his servant in anything but a self-gratifying light.

'I am sure,' he said, 'I am very sorry. I did not know that it was anything so very dreadful. The poor fellow has a wife and children depending on him, and he's such a drunken rascal, that if I turned him off, I am afraid he would not be able to get a place anywhere else ; at least, not unless he mended his ways, which, I confess, I don't think there's much chance of his doing in this world.'

'Then, sir,' said papa, in his deep, sonorous tone, 'there is no chance of it in another. Where the "tree falls," there, sir, shall it lie.'

'Don't you see, my dear sir,' said Mr.

Retnor, in his vulgarly familiar manner, 'don't you see that you might be made this man's salvation, if you would set to work at once, and in earnest?'

'I might,' said the Captain, alarmed, '*what* did you say I might be made?'

'Everything, my dear sir, everything. When a man works himself there is no limit to what he may accomplish.'

'But he may wear himself out,' said Aunt Gretta; 'he must get exhausted. I am no advocate for this great amount of work; few systems are equal to it.'

Mr. Retnor loftily passed by this interruption. He went on, 'Look here, Captain Marshall, as soon as you get home, take your man by his collar, hold him fast, and let him see you are in earnest. Say to him, "Listen, you drunken rascal. If I find you at it once again, out into the streets you go, neck or nothing, and starve if you like." And out he should go, if I had him to deal with, even if he were found dead in a gutter the next morning.'

Captain Marshall could not see it; I am glad he could not.

‘I have no doubt you are right,’ he said, ‘but I acknowledge that I cannot quite see it in that light. I daresay I have not been the most careful of masters, and to treat the poor fellow in such a way is not according to my notions, though perhaps I am wrong.’

‘You are not wrong!’ I cried. I could not help it, but I could get no further. Captain Marshall looked at me so gratefully, Charlotte so angrily, and papa so reprovngly, that, happily for myself, my tongue clave to the roof of my mouth.

‘You will find it as well, Maude, my dear,’ said papa, ‘if you will learn in silence occasionally, instead of trying to show how much you can differ from everyone else.’

‘I am sure it’s very good of Miss Maude to take my part,’ blundered poor Captain Marshall, evidently thinking it incumbent on him to do something to get me out of a reproof, into which he had been the means of

bringing me. 'I never was up to an argument about anything ; it is not much in my line.'

'My dear sir,' said papa, with the air of an archbishop addressing a beardless curate, 'my dear sir, I trust this little discussion will not have been wholly thrown away upon you. Youth is often—nor can I deny that under some aspects it is not altogether an unpleasing trait—youth is often swayed more by feeling than by sound views, and, without due caution and rigid self-control, that warmth of feeling and heedlessness of expression may degenerate into looseness of principle and laxity of conduct. It is the part of a brave man to set his face as a flint against any matter—especially a matter involving a point of moral conduct—which is not in accordance with that regularity and probity, the attainment of which ought to be the aim of every individual. I trust, wherever your lot be cast, you will advocate the principles of unswerv-

ing integrity, strict sobriety, and unimpeachable moral rectitude.'

There was a pause. Papa waited for a reply, but none came. It required a minute at least for Captain Marshall to recover his breath, which he had not dared to take during papa's speech ; and when he could recollect himself, he took the wise step of giving an answer which, though it might not be all the answer Dr. Maynard expected, would not, at least, involve his guest to any considerable extent.

'I'm sure I'm very much obliged to you,' he said.

This struck me as something of an anticlimax, and I tried to go through a prolonged sneeze. The pause continued, until at last papa wisely ended it by returning thanks in a sentence framed and worded for some one's benefit. Whether it was for Captain Marshall's or mine, I am still doubtful.

It was pleasant to get into the garden, and there, amid the odour of flowers, the hum of

insects, and Gypsie's little pattering talk, forget that, though I had tried to help the poor Captain, my desire had, as usual, signally failed in accomplishing its object.

School-time soon came ; that is always a pleasant time ; and happily I managed as we walked down to the village to evade the Captain's questions about an afternoon service, and I had the satisfaction of hearing his dog-cart pass the school-house ten minutes after.

Gypsie and I went with our flowers to the churchyard after tea, and had a very quiet walk home. Our last Sunday here for six weeks !

CHAPTER VIII.

Wednesday, September 1.

WE start to-morrow. Aunt Gretta's packing is finished ; she has been a fortnight over it. She will be a fortnight in unpacking and arranging the things when we get to Scarborough, and she will be a fortnight before we leave in packing again ; so employment is provided for her for most of the time.

Charlotte, too, will have Mr. Retnor some of the time. Scarborough is Elysium to Maggie. With lying in bed, dressing, walking on the Spa, and flirting, she has a glorious time of it. Two or three of the officers have declared their intention of going, so we shall have company independently of visitors.

Papa, too, will compose, translate, study, reflect, explore, and, as a general relaxation, superintend the conduct of the three Misses Maynard, and by his watchful supervision preclude any stain or blemish being brought upon the good old name of Maynard through the thoughtlessness, perversity, or inherent 'queerness' of the youngest daughter.

And Gypsie and I? We will have a happy time. Why not? The world is not all dark, Gypsie!

I have just come from your bedside, having crept there shoeless and quiet to steal another look at my darling. There he lies; tossed, and turned, and tumbled, till he looks as if he had dropped out of heaven, and had not yet found his right place on earth. I have relieved my soul by ten dozen kisses, and crept back.

Yes, Gypsie, we will have a happy time! The sea is blue, and fresh winds blow from it, and they cool hot hands and tired hearts. The sky is clear, and there shines from it a radi-

ance and a light which steals into weary souls, and warms them again into life and vigour. The earth is green and fresh, and there comes from it a beauty and a brightness which thrills one's being. We will be happy, Gypsie ; why not ? And the month will soon pass away, and we will come back again to Stonecross, and to the church, and the schools, and to—to Mrs. Morris's grave.

I was there to-night. It seemed a duty. A whole month, and I could not go. It was right to go to-night ; yes, I am sure it was. I am very glad that I went.

It looks so fresh—not bright, only green, cool, refreshing, like, I could fancy, the promised land looked to Moses when he viewed it from Nebo. If that history be true, how much Moses must have longed to enter in !

To-night I would have been quite willing to lie by that poor woman if I might have been at rest. Perhaps my usual *malheur*, 'fatality'—what is it ?—has followed me more closely to-day ; perhaps my evil genius has

been quickened into keener life ; perhaps it was only the heat, or my own bad temper, not Charlotte's unkindness, and papa's constant misunderstanding.

I longed to get out of the house to-night ; my heart was very heavy, and my head ached sadly ; so I gathered some flowers and went to Mrs. Morris's grave. I did not take Gypsie with me. I did not want him to see that I had been crying.

As I said, the grave looked fresh, green, cool. I can describe it in no other way. I had tried to keep it like that. I had a feeling that Mr. Morris would not like bright colours, gay flowers, oppressive perfumes, only something that seemed restful.

I stayed there a long time, and was rested. I was coming away, when I saw Gypsie's friend, the schoolmaster, in the churchyard. He must have seen me too, for he came towards me, and began to speak about Gypsie.

‘ You are leaving to-morrow for a month

or six weeks ?' he said, when he had finished what he was saying about Gypsie.

' Yes.'

' You have made arrangements as to your school and class, and work in the village, of course ?' he said.

I cannot think how it is, but this man, whom I have not spoken to half-a-dozen times, seems, in some extraordinary way, to take the right to say just what he chooses to me. I cannot understand it, only I know it is very pleasant.

I had not made any arrangements. I never give myself the trouble to do that. The luckless man whom papa had engaged to do duty for him during his absence, must have found himself extremely puzzled to provide for the various small matters he would find left without anyone to see after them.

' No,' I said ; ' I have arranged nothing.'

' That is not wisely done,' said Mr. Farren ; ' if work of this kind is worth doing, it is worth doing well.'

‘Somebody will see after it,’ I said.

‘Somebody is nobody,’ he said. ‘There is an amazing amount of work in the world to be done by “somebody,” which, of course, never is done ; and if it were, it would in no degree lessen the amount of responsibility incurred by others.’

‘Am I among the others ?’ I said, smiling.

‘Unquestionably you are. Work, in itself, is a responsibility and a power committed to you, and to treat it either with inattention or listlessness, betokens a great fault somewhere.’

‘Very possibly,’ I said. ‘I know I have a great many faults.’

‘But one, of which you do not think much, and yet it is a great one, is the indifference which acknowledges faults without making an effort to cure them, and the notion that it is a virtue—a mark of candour and amiability—to acknowledge them in a general way.’

‘Well,’ I said, for the truth of his remark came home, and I winced under it, ‘I am sure I am much obliged to you.’

‘I am glad you are,’ he said, gravely, and without the least alteration in his tone; ‘when anyone feels under obligation, generally speaking, they have pride enough not to incur it again.’

‘And how am I to do that?’ I said.

‘By removing all necessity of being told again. If you give way to listlessness—I care not how deep the cause lies—the indulgence of the feeling is only a polished form of cowardliness. Who is to take care of your large class of children when you are away enjoying yourself? Who is to do your work in the village? You enter into these matters now, because it furnishes something for you to do in the absence of other things; but if their place were supplied by a more engrossing pursuit, they would all fall to the ground.’

‘And I care not if everything did,’ I could not help exclaiming, relieved from the bottom of my heart to be able for once to speak out what I felt, without fear of reprimand. ‘I

care not if everything did ; I would not stoop an inch to pick them up again.'

' I know you would not. On everything you do it is written that it matters not how soon it all ends ; you see weariness and dissatisfaction in all, because you have not yet learnt to work for something beyond the present. Your motive is derived only from the circumstances of the hour, and therefore failure and vexation, which must arise some time or other in all work, puts a stop to all your transient energy. Feeling is the all-powerful guide with you, and a sorry life of ups and downs it leads you.'

No one—excepting my old friend Dr. Vanny, who sometimes takes it into his head to give me a hard rub and be very disagreeable and cross—no one had ever spoken to me in this way before. Fault-finding and misunderstanding were nothing new ; but for the truth to be put before me so boldly, and yet so kindly, as if I were a rational creature and worth convincing, not forcing, was a

totally new experience ; I thrilled under it. If he would but go on talking I cared not what he said !

‘ I have nothing to do,’ I said. ‘ I would, so willingly, lie down here and be at rest.’

‘ That notion of rest is a mistake,’ he said. ‘ If a guilty conscience can haunt a hereafter, your rest is a delusion. It is a selfish seeking for what you have no claim to—you have never earned rest ; rest is for the worker ; but you are not a worker ; you are only a dreamer, and when you awake from your dream, you may find the opportunity gone and the possibility vanished.’

‘ I have nothing to do,’ I repeated. ‘ Why should a poor woman like Mrs. Morris be taken, when she was needed so much, and I be left ?’

‘ God is quite able to govern His own world without any suggestions from you,’ was the reply I received ; ‘ if He chose to take her and to leave you, you have nothing at all to do with it.’

‘I have everything to do with it,’ I exclaimed. ‘What is the use of my life?’

‘That is a grave question,’ he said; ‘one which I am glad to hear you put to yourself, if you will but diligently seek out the answer.’

‘I have asked it many times,’ I said, ‘and I do not care to ask it now. I am utterly regardless; things may happen as they choose. I suppose I shall do as other people do, get through life somehow, die, and there will be an end of it.’

‘There will not be an end of it,’ he said; ‘there will then be a beginning; but you are not trying even to get ready for that beginning, and yet you have “nothing to do.”’

‘Nor have I. I could drop out of my place to-morrow, and it would make no difference except ——’

‘Yes, Gypsie. It would make a difference to him, I suppose?’

‘You suppose! Oh, Mr. Farren, you *know* it would.’

‘But you assured me again and again, just

now, so positively that you had nothing to do, that I imagined for a moment it was the truth.'

'It is the truth,' I said.

'Pardon me, it is not the truth ; it is a *lie*—yes, even that. It is better to find out the truth and face it than to cover it with pretty words, and let it go by. If it be true that Gypsie would miss you, it is equally true that you must have work. If one human soul has the power of influencing another human soul, there is work for it to do ; and also, if you could find no human being who has not the least power or influence over any other human being, I will still show you one who has a mighty work to do ; work enough to fill up every space of a long life. And so long as there is work, there is plenty of room for hope, and no room for despair. If God gave a human being no work, he would give him no hope ; and if He gave him no hope, he would give him despair ; and if He gave him despair, He would at once take him to hell,

instead of leaving him to take up room upon earth.'

As I listened, a strange new impulse crept over me. Then, there really was something which would be left undone, did I not do it. This man would not tell me a lie. I lifted my eyes to the blue sky above, but it was the same; I looked on the earth around, it was the same; but I felt a first faint feeling of belief; some ray of hope had entered my heart.

Mr. Farren went on: 'I cannot tell what work is before you, but that there is some, I no more doubt than I do my own existence. Your saying you would like to die is a morbid desire to create a sensation. Should such an event be likely to occur, you would anticipate with satisfaction and complacency the comments which might arise and the regret which might be expressed. Your saying that you have no work is a phase of the same disease. You would like to have it contradicted, and to be assured that you have a vast amount of

important concerns committed to your guidance ; in fact, that the world could not move on without you. Your declaring that no one would miss you is a symptom of exactly the same disorder. You want to feel that you are somebody very necessary, and that a whole village would go mourning if you disappeared from the midst. And because you have not all this, you will have nothing ; you will do nothing, and you cover the idleness which shrinks from what it ought to do by cheating yourself into the belief that it is humility and self-distrust.'

I neither spoke nor looked a reply. Such words were utterly new to me, and I blushed with conscious shame, for I knew it was true. And he said it so gently, yet so firmly, that I admitted it at once.

He looked me full in the face. ' Am I not right,' he said ; ' have you not yet to learn to believe in God ? I don't say, to *say* you believe, but to do it. Have you not to assure yourself without a doubt that there is a Here-

after—an eternity, a rest, call it what you like—that depends on the need which you feel the strongest ; but that there is something which will satisfy that need, be it what it may—have you not to teach yourself that you are unfitted for that state, and to learn how to become fitted ? and yet you say that you have no work to do !’

I did not interrupt him, and he went on : ‘ Here is work enough, how much ! And to be ready for it, you have to fling off the falsehoods and sophisms which blind you, and to seize and hold fast the truth. Do this, and when you have done it, you will ask, in wonder, which of all the duties which throng around you, you can do first, and how you can get them all done in so short a time as life.’

I did not speak, and he did not for some time, and when he did, he said, ‘ You must go home now ; it is growing late, and the dew is falling,’ and I turned to go.

Through the churchyard, along the lane, over the fields, Mr. Farren and I went with-

out exchanging another word, until we came in sight of the Hall, and I said, 'Mr. Farren, will you tell me one thing—how do you know anything about me?'

'I have been asking myself as I came along,' he said, 'how it has happened that I have talked to you as I have done. But I do not repent; no, I am very glad. When one has passed through a fever oneself, it is impossible to mistake the symptoms in another. I detected them in you the first time I saw you, and I was sorry, I never see anyone in the dark but I experience an intense longing to show them, as far as I can, that there is light and warmth somewhere; and if they can be persuaded that it exists, they will possibly seek after, and perhaps find it. I know exactly how you are feeling; the disease is growing upon you, and in time it may affect Gypsie.'

'No,' I said, 'nothing bad touches him.'

'It cannot be so always,' he said; 'if there is one thought which would be a remem-

brance of agony, it would be the thought of having done harm to Gypsie.'

'If there is a God, He will take care of Gypsie,' I said.

'He will,' said Mr. Farren, 'because there is no "if," in the case; but it may be in a manner which you would not like; nor will that fact free you from responsibility; and in a world where so much is needed, it is a pity for so much to be thrown away. Position, education, talents, influence, and riches, they can do so much; and so much has to be done. Will you do it?'

'I will try,' I said; 'but how can I?'

'Ah!' he said, 'there it is—how? But, Miss Maude, you and I have both read—at least, somehow we have heard; it may be a legend, or a fable, or the truth—we have heard that somewhere among the Judean hills there once lived a poor man, who had wonderful riches; a weary man, who could give rest; a weak man, who could give comfort; a hungry man, who could supply food for body

and soul ; a man who ate and drank with sinners, and yet had mastery over all sin ; who wept, and could dry tears ; who suffered, and could save from suffering ; who died, and could raise from death ; who was buried, and yet lives, and will live, we are told, for ever and ever. If this be a legend, it is more beautiful than the fables of mighty Rome, or the lore of classic Greece. If it be a truth, it is worth inquiring into, thinking about, and perhaps—believing. Good night, Miss Maude.

Of course, he meant Jesus Christ. He must have done.

CHAPTER IX.

Scarborough, Tuesday, October 5.

WE have been here five weeks, and I have never found time to write even in my diary. There seem to be no quiet times. With dressing, and pic-nicing, and bathing, and boating, and riding, and attending to Aunt Gretta, and giving all the time I can to Gypsie, I have no leisure.

I do long to be at Stonecross again. I do not think this hotel life suits me. It is very grand, I daresay, to have clerical-looking waiters with white ties and noiseless footsteps to supply every want and put before you courses at dinner, until you forget what you began with, long before you get to the end; but I would far rather have our good old James and the waitress at home.

All this state and immensity delights Maggie ; it disgusts and wearies me. She thinks the most delicious life in the world is to breakfast at ten ; spend the morning in an elegant 'costume' on the 'Spa,' flirting to the extent of her by no means limited powers ; then to dawdle another hour over luncheon, and pass the afternoon lying down, deciding what dress she shall wear at dinner, what officer she shall flirt with that evening, what 'appearance' she shall make on the Spa or at the dance.

Charlotte, I think, enjoys it. She does not favour me with her confidence, but she and Mr. Retnor are really engaged. I have tried very much these last five weeks to please her, and to patiently bear her rebukes, and I cannot help thinking that perhaps I have succeeded a little ; at least, she has twice said, 'What has come over you, Maude ? You have got some new crotchet in your head ; I wish it may last ;' so surely, that is an admission that I am a little changed for the

better. And I know Maggie has made plenty of use of me, and I have always to be dressed in good time for dinner, that I may be useful to her.

These are very little things, but still they are all I can do; and I laid awake three or four hours that last night at home, thinking what I could do in the way of 'right-doing.'

Then, I have not so much of papa here. Though he certainly does not miss any opportunity of admonishing me, the opportunity does not occur so frequently as at Stonecrosss. He has been over there twice, and stayed three or four days each time. I wonder how it looked! How I should like to have seen it! I wonder that Aunt Gretta, and Charlotte and Maggie, are not longing to be at home again. I really do much dislike this life, excepting the long walks I get alone with Gypsie.

Sometimes we wander for hours on a quiet part of the sands, far away from the troops of visitors, and with only the waves

for our companions. Sometimes we find quiet nooks in the cliffs—hermit-like spots, where we can sit as we used to sit at Stone-cross; and instead of having the song of the brook, we have the deep voice of many waters. Sometimes we roam along the cliffs; sometimes on the road to Scalby, sometimes to the woods beyond, sometimes to the Forge Valley, and watch the sun beginning to set, and talk, as Gypsie and I love to talk, for it is only now and then we can get away for so long together.

But even when we cannot, we try to leave the swarms of children and nursemaids, young ladies and their beaux, and anxious papas and mammas, and find out some nook behind a rock, away from the eternal chatter of people and the noise of that everlasting band, and sit down and talk. What Gypsie says always comes fresh as the dew of heaven, while the chit-chat—I will not say conversation—of the people here is flat and wearisome; nay, more, it is stupid, silly, and senseless.

This morning we have been on the bridge and in the gardens with three officers, and I cried with vexation when I came back to think that I had spent my time in such a way. Not one word that was worth listening to! And to think that I should have spent two hours—not *spent* them, wasted them—in walking up and down the Spa, dressed like a figure in a milliner's shop, in company with Captain Marshall, Captain Snuffins (Maggie's friend), and a Major Priggins!

We seemed to attract a great deal of notice. Did people envy us, and, if so, for what? Our dress? I should have liked to have tied a stone to every trunk of finery belonging to us, and cast them into the waves. I am tired to death with this everlasting—'What shall I wear to-night, Maude?' 'How did you think I looked last night?' 'Did that pink suit me as well as the blue?' 'I wonder which dress Captain Snuffins admires the most.' 'I have had that on four times, I shall not wear it again here.' 'I

declare if that ugly Miss —— hasn't got a dress just the colour of my new silk ! What a fright she looks in it !' &c., &c., &c. These are the unending themes of Maggie's conversation.

I am cross this afternoon, very cross, I feel sure ; but perhaps the still heat of the day causes me to feel like this. It is a strange day, so oppressive that I can scarcely breathe with the window wide open ; it must portend a storm. Captain Marshall said it did ; and how the clouds have gathered and blackened ever since we came in ! Papa has gone to Burlington and taken Gypsie with him. I wanted Captain Marshall to go with them, but he would not. Stupid man ! I want to make myself dislike him, and I am afraid I cannot. Perhaps, after all, the best thing will be to marry him. Now, let me try and think what we really did and said this morning, and see, after all, if there was anything in it worth being cross about.

Charlotte and Mr. Retnor were not of our

party. They are to be married shortly. They conduct their business — both the walking and the talking—in their approved method of doing everything ; prompt, vigorous, decided. No lingering, loving looks ; no prolonged partings—delicious in their pain—with Mr. Retnor and Charlotte. The other day I watched them make their way up Oliver's Mount, looking as unlike two lovers as anyone can well imagine two people together—male and female—to look. Mr. Retnor always walks very quickly, firmly, and with long strides ; his head carried perfectly straight on his shoulders, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left ; he steers onward—straight on. He always seems, when walking, to have some unseen goal in view, to loiter on the way to which would be instant destruction ; he never pauses to rest, like Gypsie's picture of Christian in the arbour ; but when he has reached his destination, he turns round, and walks back with the same unfailing, resolute step, as if an equal pressure of business

awaited him on his return. Charlotte marched by his side, not looking a whit less resolute or more inclined to loiter than he. I wondered, as I watched them, if they had laid a wager who should get to the top of the mount first. Mr. Retnor is constantly urging Maggie to climb up Oliver's Mount. Maggie lifts up her hands, and gives the most musical little scream at the idea.

Maggie and myself, Captain Marshall, Captain Snuffins, and a Major Priggins, made our party this morning. How Maggie can endure Captain Snuffins, I cannot think. He is almost as disagreeable as Mr. Retnor; he is too vapid and senseless to be quite as disagreeable. Captain Marshall seems a sensible, manly fellow by him. Major Priggins is a bachelor of fifty; a man who has 'seen the world' and thinks it betokens his high breeding and extensive knowledge to exhibit his disgust at everything good and great, and to season his conversation with all kinds of expletives. Certainly, Captain

Marshall was the best of the trio, and he very sensibly proposed that we should take a boat instead of strolling on the Spa, but Maggie was not in the humour for it.

‘It is so hot,’ she said.

‘Well,’ said Captain Marshall, ‘that is the very reason why it would be so pleasant to be on the water. Not that it isn’t extremely pleasant being anywhere in such company. I don’t mean that, of course; only I think that a boat would be pleasanter; there’s always such a nice breeze on the water. What do you say, Miss Maude?’

‘I should like it very much,’ I said. ‘I always prefer boating to any other way of spending the time, and one’s only object here seems to be to spend the time.’

‘I am so glad we think alike,’ said Captain Marshall, complaisantly. ‘Come, Miss Margaret, let me persuade you.’

But Maggie was unpersuadable; of course she was, with a new morning ‘costume’ on, with eighteen graduated flounces and frills.

‘How can you be so inconsiderate, Captain Marshall?’ she said. ‘The last time we boated you splashed the spray all over my new hat.’

‘He did!’ shouted Major Priggins. ‘By Jove, Miss Margaret, he deserved ducking for it. Why didn’t you tell me, and I would have given him a dip to teach him better manners.’

‘Marthall ith’nt a lady’th man at all,’ lisped Captain Snuffins, in his tones of ineffable sweetness. ‘He thows more to advantage in a camp, Mith Maude, or at the head of hith regiment, than in a drawing-room. I will thay that for him. Plenty of pluck no doubt he’d have on a battle-field.’

‘I’m much obliged to you, I’m sure,’ said Captain Marshall, ‘for your good opinion. I wish everyone thought the same of me.’

These last words were said with a look at me—a sheepish look—perhaps he thought it touching; whatever it was, it was seen by Major Priggins, who burst into a laugh so

loud that it thrilled the delicate nerves of Captain Snuffins, who perceptibly shivered—like a scented tea-rose quivering in a rough blast of wind—delicate creature!

‘By George!’ said the Major, when he had finished his laugh, ‘I saw you! Never mind, old boy! Don’t tell tales, eh? If you can’t sigh like a—what is it old Shakespeare says?—“sighing like furnace.” You see, Miss Maude, I know something of literature. Egad! what a fine-looking girl that is! Saw her yesterday on the Bridge—didn’t look herself at all then—looks herself to-day, and a very fine self it is. What a bust! and eyes as black as—as thunder. Did you speak, Miss Maude? Beg pardon, thought you did—shall be happy to listen when you do. By George, another!—not quite so fine as the other, though!—looks somewhat seedy—sat up too late last night—never do that, young ladies—take my advice—advice of an old stager—spoils complexion—and brings on—brings on—liver complaint, I believe.’

‘What a great deal you know, Major Priggins, to be thure!’ said his subordinate.

‘Of course—why shouldn’t I? Studied many things in my time. Ah, ah! very interesting studies too, some of them. Capital place this Scarborough for seeing human nature! What, the deuce! If there isn’t that confounded Plumpkins walking with Miss ——! Meant to walk with her myself. Never mind!—she’ll think better of it to-morrow. Greatest fool that ever walked, that Plumpkins!’

‘Not quite,’ I thought. Did I look it? I hope not. I must have looked something, for Major Priggins stopped to put up his eye-glass at me, as he was beginning to speak again.

‘Anything wrong, Miss Maude? What’s the matter? Got a pain in your back or a tight shoe on? Saw somebody you didn’t wan’t to see walking with somebody you did want to see? Never mind, won’t be with them to-morrow, I’ll wager my head!’

‘I wish you would,’ I thought, and lose it.

My lips opened, but I choked the words.

‘Don’t seem to be enjoying yourself,’ continued the Major. ‘Wish I could make you happy—nothing like making pretty girls happy—could spend my life doing it—charming employment! Miss Maude, what can I do for you?’

‘Maude doesn’t like enjoying herself like other people,’ said Maggie. ‘What an ugly shape! Do look, Captain Snuffins! how horribly that dress hangs! Before I would be seen out such a fright!’

‘Ith, Mith —, bleth my thoul!’ cried Captain Snuffins. ‘I’ve no doubt in the world the thinkth herthelf a great beauty! Mon-throuth mithtake! Ath you thay, Mith Margaret, her dreth ith horrid!’

‘What taste some people have, to be sure,’ said Maggie; ‘they seem to try and make frights of themselves.’

‘Egad!’ cried the Major, ‘but the most

part of them needn't try; they can save themselves that trouble. What is Marshall sulking about? Want a boat with Miss Maude, eh? Never mind—don't be chap-fallen, man. I daresay Miss Maude will do something else for you quite as nice.'

'You will oblige me, Major Priggins,' I began, in wrathful tones.

'Eh! can I? So glad!' he interrupted. 'Do tell me how. It's the very thing I want to know. Saw that girl a week ago—"her bright smile haunts me still!" What were you going to say, Miss Maude?'

'Nothing,' I said, as shortly and sharply as I could.

'So sorry! thought you were. Try again—perhaps you may think of something—make me very happy to hear it! By George! but it is monstrous hot, and no mistake! Nice seat here—plenty of room—good view—see everybody. What a noise that sea does make!—confound it! wish it would be still a bit!—very hot for it to be

running about so fast—must put itself into a great perspiration—eh ! eh ! what a joke !’

Apparently Major Priggins thought it a very good one, for he laughed until he had to take out his pocket-handkerchief to wipe his face. Captain Snuffins joined in with his infantine treble. Captain Marshall looked at me, and did *not* laugh.

‘Would you not like a boat ?’ he said. ‘Do now, Miss Maude, and we’ll leave the others here ; they needn’t come, you know.’

‘Oh, needn’t they !’ exclaimed Major Priggins. ‘Pretty good, by George ! I should think they need not ! What do you say, Miss Margaret ? Must they ? ’Pon my word, if they fall overboard, they’ll be a couple of water-ducks, and no mistake !’

‘Quite withy, ’pon my thoul,’ simpered Captain Snuffins.

‘Withy ? What’s that ? You aren’t thinking of Samson and Delilah, are you ?’ said Major Priggins. ‘Oh ! *witty*—beg pardon—’pon honour, Snuffins, beg pardon ; really do.’

‘But do, Miss Maude,’ persisted Captain Marshall.

‘No, I won’t,’ I said; I dare say rudely, I felt so provoked.

‘A young lady’s “no” goes for “yes,” Marshall,’ said the Major. ‘Pick up your feathers, my man; Miss Maude means “yes!”’

‘I always say what I mean,’ I said.

‘Thuch decithion!’ murmured Captain Snuffins.

‘Oh, don’t begin arguing!’ cried Maggie; ‘if you begin with Maude, she never finishes.’

‘Should like to begin, ’pon honour,’ said the Major; ‘very charming, never to finish. Don’t you think so, Marshall?’

‘That depends,’ began Captain Marshall.

‘Not at all, man. Hang it! What a queer temper you’re in! what’s it all about? Miss Maude, have you been looking cross?’

‘Maude always looks cross,’ said Maggie, ‘when I enjoy myself the most. She thinks

it's all waste of time. What's the good of coming to Scarborough, if you are not to enjoy yourself ?'

'Enjoy it!' I said; 'do you call this *enjoyment* ?'

'The very height of it,' simpered Captain Snuffins, edging nearer Maggie; 'now, isn't it, Mith Margaret ?'

'Of course,' said Maggie, simpering back. 'Oh my! Look at that petticoat! work half a yard deep! it's sure not to be real; she's such a common-looking person, not a lady at all. I wonder what it cost a yard ?'

'Thomething very conthiderable,' said Captain Snuffins, with a deeply meditative air.

'So you don't like Scarborough, Miss Maude,' said the Major.

'Like it!' I exclaimed, 'I hate it; I don't mean *it*, but the people and the habits, and the way of spending time.'

'How energetic!' exclaimed Captain Snuffins.

‘La, Maude!’ yawned Maggie, ‘don’t now begin to argue, it’s so hot!’

‘Dare thay Mith Maude likth reading, and all that kind of thing, better,’ said Captain Snuffins; ‘now, *I* think thith ith abtholutely delightful.’

‘Literary turn, eh?’ said the Major; ‘very nice indeed, all that kind of thing—Byron, Moore, Shelley, &c. &c.—liked it myself in my young days—find it too fatiguing now, Miss Maude, but very charming in you. Look at that old puppy ogling that girl! Hōw he is dyed and got up! Hang it! before I would dye my whiskers, I’d be shaved!’

‘Why, I thought you *did* dye them, Major,’ said Captain Marshall, innocently.

‘Go to the devil, sir, with what you thought, and wait there until I send for you!’ shouted the Major, in a rage. ‘Beg pardon, Miss Maude—really do, Marshall—didn’t mean it—but you should think before you speak.’

‘I did think,’ said the crestfallen Captain

Marshall; 'I'm sure I thought it was only the truth.'

'I wouldn't be cross, I'm sure,' said Maggie; 'it really is too hot to be cross.'

'I hope you don't feel very fatigued,' said her companion; 'you don't look it—thuth a charming colour, to be thure!'

'Here's Miss Maude got a charming colour,' said the Major. 'Excuse me, Miss Maude, but you do really look rather blue. Don't find no very agreeable company, I'm afraid. What can I talk about to amuse you, as you won't talk yourself?'

'If you will find something worth talking about, Major Priggins, I will try and talk.'

'Really—very obliging. Miss Margaret, what interests your sister?'

'Dirty children,' said Maggie, 'and Sunday-schools; sitting by herself, and going to mysterious places with Gypsie. Maude is very stupid, I must say. I believe she would

come out even here in a gingham, if she might.'

'And would look as well as anybody else in silks and satins!' exclaimed my admirer.

'Bravo!' cried the Major; 'well done, my boy! Isn't that something to please you, Miss Maude?'

'No, not at all,' I said.

'I give in,' said the Major; 'do some of you suggest something that will please Miss Maude.'

'Theemth to be rather difficult,' said Captain Snuffins. 'I find wonderful amutement here; niceth plathe going, Thcarborough. Don't you think tho, Mith Margaret?'

'Oh, charming!' said Maggie; 'but Maude is always different to everyone else. Who is that handsome man, Major Priggins?'

'What handsome man?' cried the Major. 'He handsome! He has a hooked nose; he

has indeed, Miss Margaret. He's staying at the — ; younger son of some unknown family—has to put on those airs because he hasn't much else to put on—worn that coat ever since he came—has, 'pon honour, poor dog ! I wonder you should admire him !'

'I don't admire him particularly,' said Maggie, who had in perfection the art of making herself agreeable to whatever gentleman she talked to. 'There are a great many handsomer men here,' she added, with a fascinating smile.

Major Priggins bowed.

'I think there are a great many muffs,' said Captain Marshall ; 'seems to me the place is full of them.'

'Dear me !' cried Maggie. 'I wonder you should say so, Captain Marshall ! How very rude of you ! You're a perfect bear !'

'And a very thulky one, too !' lisped the treble at Maggie's right hand.

'Large mind Marshall has,' said the Major ; 'must have, eh, Miss Maude ?—can't find

amusement in what interests us—must be pre-occupied, to say nothing more—pour out your sorrows, old boy, and I'll shrive you—that's the right thing, isn't it, Miss Maude?—that's in your line—go to church every Sunday, Miss Maude, at home?'

'Certainly,' I said.

'And to Sunday-school?'

'Yes.'

'Very nice, I'm sure! Dear me, what a sudden colour—very nice to blush so—looks so interesting—ten times better than rouge—never rouge, Miss Maude, when you blush so charmingly—nature's rouge—putting it on rather thickly just now. Marshall goes to prayers regular as the clock—good boy, Marshall—goes when he's not on duty, Miss Maude—does his duty on or off—nice church at your place, Miss Maude?—oh! beg pardon—papa clergyman—charming old gent—quite forgotten that—heard Marshall say what a preacher he was—intense respect for the cloth, and for him in particular—have, on honour—

felt it when quite a boy—didn't know what it was then—know now—right feeling, you know, and all that kind of thing !'

'If I don't think it's beginning to rain !' said Captain Snuffins.

'Rain !' cried the Major. 'Ought to know better—confound it ! what is it raining for ?—felt a drop—two drops—true as the compass—raining, and going to pour down, and no mistake ! What a confounded nuisance !'

'I'm sure I am very glad,' said Captain Marshall ; 'anything for a change.'

'Oh, you disagreeable !' cried Maggie. 'He says he's very glad, and I've got on my new "costume" ! What shall I do—what shall I do ?'

'Why, go home,' bluntly suggested Captain Marshall.

'And how am I to get there, I should like to know ?' said Maggie. 'I can't have a carriage here. I shall have my dress ruined.'

Oh, Captain Marshall, you really are disagreeable ; you're almost as bad as Maude !'

'Why, I didn't bring the rain,' said the Captain.

'No, but you said you were glad ; and I know in your heart you're very glad. I believe you want my dress to get quite spoiled. What shall I do ?'

'Make as much haste as you can,' said the practical Captain ; 'we can get a carriage at the gates.'

'With now, I'd my military cloak to thap you in,' said Captain Snuffins ; 'thould be tho glad !'

When we reached the gates, Captain Marshall, on whom always devolved anything that had to be *done*, soon found a carriage, and put us in, and as he did so, he said, 'I hope, Miss Maude, you are not wet.' I hope my answer was very civil, for we left him standing hat in hand, and looking quite radiant.

Captain Snuffins went with us ; he being formed of that delicate material which will

not bear a shower of rain with impunity. How would he stand a shower of grape-shot or a volley of musketry ?

Well, I left Captain Marshall happy, and am glad I did. Shall I marry this man—shall I ? This question comes to me again and again. It comes now, as I sit by this open window, pen in hand, trying to recall every word of our morning's entertainment. This is the way in which we have spent our time for the last five weeks. I honestly believe that this is a fair sample of all our conversations in our walks and drives. I have not exaggerated a thing ; I have put it down as far as I could remember, word for word. And is there one syllable that is worth recalling, or was ever worth uttering ? Not one.

How pleasant this rain is ! It is coming now, fast and heavy. All day there has been the feeling of a storm in the air—a quiet, dim, strange brooding ; a whisper of something to come ; a mysterious Presence, as if the storm-god hovered invisible. It seems wrong to

break this strange, still gloom, even with the noise of the falling rain ; it seems as if it ought to wait until we see what the silence portends.

There ! I hear a low growl—the first sullen footstep of the storm ! Now a flash ! How it shot over the sea ! And the waves answer. They lift themselves up in strange beauty, growing wilder and wilder every moment. Billows now they are—billows, angry and tossed, and lashing themselves into fury ! Papa and Gypsie ! They are not home yet, but the steamer must be in. I have been watching the last half-hour to see them drive up. I wonder how it is that they do not come. They expected to be back before now. I wish Gypsie were here. There is the dressing-bell ; I will go and help Maggie.

CHAPTER X.

Wednesday, October 6.

I HAVE had such a dreadful headache all the day that I have not been able to do anything. Aunt Gretta insisted upon my lying down. I have been trying, but I could not sleep. I cannot lie any longer ; I cannot be still. I will try and think quietly about last night, but it seems too dreadful even to think about. My little Gypsie, my brother ! I could not give you up. You are all I have, Gypsie. I can look straight into your eyes, and not blush and be ashamed for I know not what. I can put my arms round you, and shed hot tears and hot kisses, and you do not reproach me and make me shrink back. I can sit with your little hand in

mine, and feel that I am not altogether accursed and cast out from every loving heart. My little Gypsie! But God has not taken you! I reverently acknowledge that there is a God, and that He is merciful!

Can I give any connected account of last night? I will try. Let me think.

We had dinner, but it grew dreadful towards the end, for the storm raged furiously, and though they shut it out, and the room was brilliantly lighted, and there was as much noise and laughing as usual, I heard every roar of the sea, and every sigh of the blast. I was not far from Aunt Gretta, and it seemed as if her voice found its way to my ear every instant. She was talking about papa and Gypsie to an old lady who sat next her. They must have been mutually pleased with each other, for their tongues wagged faster and their words grew quicker each moment. Captain Marshall was very kind: he tried to talk about everything he could, to prevent me thinking about the

‘White Jacket,’ the steamer papa and Gypsie had gone in ; but still, I could’ hear Aunt Gretta’s voice through all. She was saying that if papa and Gypsie were not washed overboard, the packet would never make its way in that night, and they would be out at sea until the morning, and they would both take cold and die, or, if not, they would be cripples all the rest of their lives from rheumatism. If they stayed on board, they would be drenched to the skin ; and if they went into the cabin, they would be stifled with the heat, and there would be sure to be someone there just recovering from fever, and they would take it, especially Gypsie—children always did catch things so soon—and if he recovered from the fever, he would have nervous debility or congestion of the brain.

I was so foolish and nervous, that I found myself listening to Aunt Gretta, as if she were a prophet, and was thankful, when we rose from the table, to slip into my own room.

I threw up the window, and what a scene was before me! Was it terror, or fear, or anguish, or desire, which made me fall on my knees by the open window? I cannot tell. Nor do I know how long I had been there, when the door suddenly opened, and Maggie entered. She came into the darkness, almost like an apparition; her white evening dress gleaming in the gloom, and the jewels on her neck and arms glittering in each flash of the lightning.

‘Good gracious, Maude! what are you doing?’ she exclaimed. ‘Praying? Oh, my goodness, what a flash! What on earth will become of papa and Gypsie? They haven’t come yet, and no one knows what has become of the packet. It ought to have been in two hours ago. There’s another flash! Oh, I wish we were all safe at home!’ and Maggie began to cry piteously. ‘It was so stupid of papa to go and take Gypsie,’ she sobbed.

‘Hush, Maggie. You must not say so of papa. Who could have foreseen a storm a day like this?’

‘Who indeed? And Reynolds had made my pink barège look lovely for the promenade to-night, and this horrid rain to come! I did want to wear it, for that vulgar Mrs. Conder is sure to get one the same shade. I saw her looking at me the whole time when I wore it before. Oh dear! I wish they would come! It would not do to go down to the drawing-room to play and sing until they do come, would it, Maude? Do you think people would say anything, if I did?’

‘Yes, I should think they would say a good deal,’ I replied, shortly enough.

‘Dear, you needn’t speak in that tone. Why shouldn’t I play? Charlotte is sewing, as if for her life, and Mr. Retnor is talking the most horrid stuff to some gaunt man with a flat nose. You never saw anyone so ugly. He put his great foot on my dress just now, and has torn it quite two inches.’

‘Oh, Maggie! do leave my room,’ I said.

‘I am sure I won’t! Where am I to go to? You are dreadfully ill-tempered, Maude!’

Good gracious me ! What a flash ! I believe it has blinded me. I shall have such a headache after this, and look as white as a ghost to-morrow ; and I can't put on that blue dress I meant to wear, if I have no colour. Will it never give over raining ? Listen to the wind ! I shouldn't wonder if Gypsie's new velvet suit isn't quite spoiled.'

I could bear it no longer. I got up to leave the room, but a tremendous peal of thunder seemed to make the house shake to its centre. Maggie screamed aloud, and held so fast to me that I could not move. In the silence which succeeded the peal and the scream, a knock was heard at the door. I savagely shook off Maggie, who immediately buried her head in the bed-clothes, and stopped her ears with both hands. I ran to the door—it was a maid with a message—' If you please, miss, if you are not engaged, a gentleman would like to speak with you a moment.'

' I am not engaged. Where is he ?'

‘He is waiting here, miss.’

I followed the girl out of the room, and a few yards further on I found Captain Marshall. He stood uneasily, changing from one foot to the other. ‘Miss Maude,’ he began, ‘I beg your pardon for interrupting you, but I thought—you know—I felt sure you’re anxious, and it’s not so bad outside. One always feels these storms more, listening inside; and I thought perhaps you would like to go down to the pier, and then you would see Gypsie the first. I am going now. The packet is sure to be in before we get there; no doubt, she’s damaged some of her machinery. These trip packets are often old, crazy things, but there’s not the least real danger; she’s sure to be in, and then you can come up with Gypsie.’

‘A thousand thanks, Captain Marshall,’ I cried. ‘I have been longing to go.’

I ran off before I had finished speaking, and Captain Marshall cried out, ‘Be sure you wrap up, Miss Maude, as much as ever

you can ; it blows a hurricane, and put on something water-tight.'

I was ready in two minutes. Fortunately, Maggie had buried her head so deeply and stopped her ears so securely, that she neither saw nor heard me.

'Well, if you aren't a brick !' was Captain Marshall's exclamation, when I re-appeared. 'Excuse me, Miss Maude ; why, how the—how you do walk !'

We were at the foot of the grand staircase, and stood on the flight of steps leading to the entrance, before he had finished speaking.

'You take away my breath more than the storm,' he said, laughing. 'Do take my arm ; you'll be blown into the sea if you don't.'

'No, no,' I said ; and not another word was exchanged between us until we reached the pier.

I noticed a crowd of people—anxious, waiting, looking, fearing ! Wives and children

and sisters and brothers of fishermen, whose little barques were being tossed on the ocean like a straw, flung hither and thither by the wild winds of heaven. Praying, sobbing, stood some of the group—calm, tearless, others—but I could not think of them. The packet—where was the packet, which should have been in so long ago? Not a sign—not a trace of her visible; not a light, not a signal, to tell she neared us! Nothing but the howl of the wind, the crash of the thunder, the glare of the lightning, and the boom of the waves, which burst with fury and dashed with madness over the pier and the shore and the rocks. I was drenched to the skin in a moment, but I did not feel it. I heard Captain Marshall begging me to stand back and come to a more sheltered place, but his words had no meaning. I heard a confusion of voices around me in the lull of the storm, and I noticed the words ‘packet’ and ‘Flamborough Head.’ There was danger, then—real danger. Had the

packet met with some bad accident ; could she weather the gale ; had she rounded the Point ; was that a signal of distress heard ; had she many on board ; who was her captain ; would the storm have commenced before she left ; had they put back, or never started ; was she strong, fitted for a storm—but who had foreseen a storm like this in October—could she remain at open sea all night, and not be engulfed ?

I heard it all ! Gypsie, my Gypsie ! The one on this wide earth who had always loved me, whose warm kisses had kept my heart from breaking, the touch of whose hands had kept my life-blood flowing ! Gypsie, swallowed up in the boiling sea, lashed by those billows into eternity ! Gypsie, entombed in those huge mountains of water ! Gypsie, lying cold and stiff where my hands could not reach him, my love could not rescue him, my touch could not warm him, my kisses could not give him life !

No, no ! Great God of Heaven ! My

soul cried out to Thee then ! It acknowledged Thee ! Thou canst not be so cruel, so terrible in Thy power ! Take me, if Thou wilt ! Let Thy waves dash this poor worthless body to atoms against these rocks—it matters not ! Let the wild sea laugh and play and toy with these limbs until not one remains clasping the other ! Let the winds carry these atoms to the four corners of the universe ; let not one vestige remain to tell that I have ever trod Thy earth, but spare my darling ! God, Thou wilt, Thou must, Thou shalt ! Holding there, with both hands clinging to the nearest support I could find, firm and moveless, I vowed it, and grew still ! My love was mightier than the maddened sea, firmer than the rock, stronger than the waves ! Gypsie shall be saved !

The life-boat had put out. Brave men, noble men ! who cared little what befell them, if only they might save some. Again and again the lightning showed it riding gallantly

on the billows, buried in the trough of the sea, dark amid the glittering scintillations.

I was conscious that Captain Marshall kept as near me as he could, trying to shield me, and cover me with something which he held in his hand, and then, as the storm grew more and more violent, he urged my return, begging me at least to come to some shelter, or to come under cover of the Lighthouse ; but I did not reply one word, not even when he swore at his own folly in bringing me out on such a night.

And still the storm grew, and the vexed sea shook the shore in a wild and furious embrace, while flash after flash of blinding light showed the ruin made. In those momentary glimpses, we saw spars, and timber, and planks, strewing the sea like fragments of sea-weed. And now two—three—four bodies are washed on shore, and there clutched by strong hands, made wild with anguish ; and we heard the cry of the

widow and orphan of fishermen mingling their undertone of agony with the shrieks of the tempest.

But Gypsie shall live ! My soul had said it, and it should be !

A peal as of a world being rent in twain ; a light like the glare of a blazing universe ; a blast of the wind, as if every power of the infernal regions were being let loose on a doomed earth ; a boom of the sea, as if every son and daughter of Neptune rang out their voices in one mighty wail !—and there was a pause, a hush, a calm ; and in that calm, a voice close to me spoke, and the words it said were these—‘ Be not afraid, only believe.’

I did not start, or turn, or move, or tremble. I did not try to see where the words came from—from heaven, or earth, or sea, or sky, or man, or God ! I only listened.

Again a crash, a glare, a boom ! Some shrieks of anguish—then a lull ; and again a voice ; and the words it said were these—

‘ He holdeth the waters in the hollow of His hand.’

Again the artillery of heaven rang over earth, and the sea lifted up her voice and replied. Again a lurid glare shone on pale faces and powerless hands, and again there was a lull, and again a voice, and it said—‘ There shall not a hair of his head perish.’

I believed it, yes, I believed it. I held my breath, but I heard no more ; for amid the din and roar of the storm, arose a cry— ‘ She comes ! The packet ! She will weather the storm ! ’ and then every voice was lost, while the heavens spoke, and the echoing earth and the heaving sea replied.

She did come ! Her lights gleamed ; the wild sea flooded her decks, her lights were extinguished, all was dark ; she was lost to sight. Again the sky was lit up, and she showed a dark mass in the glitter and radiance, and again all was dark ! Lights again ! and again the stormy sea extinguished them ; and then, as if in defiance, there burst

forth from the rolling and pitching funnel a blaze and a volume of flame. It rose, lurid and vivid, from the black abyss of ocean, like a fire from the very mouth of hell! One moment, and it was gone! All was dark save where the lightning played its forked beams over the boiling trough of the sea. A murmur, a sob, a cry, and as it died away, a voice close beside me said, 'He bringeth them into the desired haven.'

He did! Lights again! They gleamed, they glittered, they glared! they were extinguished! but the next forked flash showed the steamer—not prostrate, not engulfed, not sinking, but making headway; wrestling, tossed, but nearing the shore! Onward she came. The life-boat was nearing her, and she was nearing it.

A slight calm. The wind sunk a little, the thunder was not so loud, the lightning not so vivid; a little, a little respite! The steamer came nearer and nearer. No sound rose from the crowd. Strong men hushed their

breath, and little children forgot to cry. Nearer! close at hand! but she can come no nearer. She halts, she stops, she is at a standstill, but for the dash and swell and heaving of the waves. And now the life-boat is close to her—a pause—she is filled, her full complement, and we wait—how long? It is done! They are safely landed! Captain Marshall speaks; he is close to me. He has been down helping them on shore. ‘They had not come, but no fear now; they will come in the next lot. Dr. Maynard is so plucky, he would wait; but Gypsie is safe—as safe as if he were in your hands, Miss Maude!’

Again a flash showed the life-boat close to the steamer; again she filled, she came in, she went back; and the moments were hours, and the hours days, and the days years, and the years a lifetime!

Could I see in that flash—was it, a tall, dark, erect figure; and closely clasped to him a child? Darkness again, all darkness, but they were close now; they were coming

off one by one, hove on shore by hands unflinching, steady, firm—hands which seized and held each passenger like a vice. I saw them—papa and Gypsie! I could see by the light of the lanterns and torches now. There he was! his long hair tossed by the storm! One moment more, and they would be on shore. Papa had to put Gypsie out of his hands for the men to take; and in that moment the sea gave one wild heave, as if in madness that she had been robbed of her prey, and a cry rose from the shore! One had been washed overboard, and that one was Gypsie!

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I tried to rush forward. A strong hand—Captain Marshall's—held me back, bound me fast, and rooted me to the spot; striving and writhing, and wrestling, but all in vain! I could not move, but they could not stop my seeing, and my eyes seemed to pierce to the depths of the sea. One horrible instant of anguish and horror, and a man plunged

into the sea, which rolled back with an angry howl like the wail of a lost spirit. I saw him, and knew him! He battled, he strove, he sunk, he rose; he showed a speck on the seething waves; he disappeared, he floated, he had got Gypsie! Saved! It rang along the shore. I remember nothing after that.

CHAPTER XI.

Saturday, October 9.

I AM better to-day. I will try and finish. I can bear to think about it now, because Gypsie is beside me.

I suppose I must have fainted the moment I knew that Gypsie was safe. For I remember nothing more until I opened my eyes and found myself in a strange place. I tried to sit up. A voice said, 'She is better now, poor thing!' I turned to look at the woman who had spoken. 'We brought you in here, Miss, for a while. You are better now,' she said.

'Yes ; I should like to go home, to the —— Hotel. I think I could walk now.'

'There is a gentleman outside, Miss. I'll

tell him you are better ;' and when she left the room, I heard a voice, which I recognised as Captain Marshall's, enquiring how I was, and if he might come in, and then he appeared.

'Are you really better, Miss Maude ?' he said. 'My goodness ! I hope you'll take no harm. What a fool I was to bring you out such a night ! But you are better ?'

I did not speak, and Captain Marshall said hurriedly, 'Gypsie is quite safe ; quite safe, on my word and honour !' he repeated, as he saw the doubt in my eyes.

'Who saved him ?'

'By George ! I don't know. The pluckiest thing in creation ! He swam like a tortoise ; never saw anything like it in my life ! What a mercy to be sure, Miss Maude !'

'But do you not know who he was ?'

'No ; no one does yet ; but I'll get to know for you. I'll enquire about it ; but would you not like to go home ?'

'Yes please, at once,' and I tried to walk to the door, but tottered.

‘Stay, stay,’ said the captain; ‘I’ll get you a carriage in no time, if such a thing is to be had on such a night as this; it’s enough to blow the soul out of one’s body. Sit down, Miss Maude.’

I did so, and as he shut the door I closed my eyes, and seemed to hear again the words, ‘He bringeth them to their desired haven.’

Did no one know who had saved Gypsie? Yes; I did.

We were soon at the hotel. The noise and bustle even in the hall seemed overpowering. I slipped aside before my appearance had been noticed, and in my bewilderment turned to the friendly captain, who was still with me—‘Will you ask someone to take me to where Gypsie is?’

‘Certainly; but if I may suggest, Miss Maude, I would ask you to go to bed at once and have something hot, or you will take your death of cold. I will tell Miss Maynard,’ and before I could stop him he was gone.

Tell Charlotte! In whatever state I was I knew, I was certain of one thing—Charlotte's anger; and I wanted to be spared it until I felt stronger. But it was too late. Captain Marshall had gone, and he soon returned with Charlotte, to whom he had evidently been describing my state in warm terms. He then left us together.

‘What is all this?’ Charlotte said, as she deliberately surveyed my appearance. ‘Some new folly, I suppose! Surely, there is enough anxiety to-night without you adding to it. Where have you been?’

‘On the pier,’ I faintly said, longing that I could get away from her gaze.

‘On the pier, a night like this! You really would try the patience of a saint, Maude! Have you no common sense, that you must add to everyone's trouble by acting like a child? I suppose now you wish to be nursed, and made a heroine of?’

‘I do not want to give any trouble,’ I

said, as firmly as I could speak ; ‘ I only want to know where Gypsie is ? ’

‘ Gypsie will do quite well without your care, thank you,’ said Charlotte, with a sneer ; ‘ we can perhaps manage to see after him. It would be a more desirable way of showing the love for Gypsie, of which you make so much parade, by behaving like other people, instead of setting him such an example of folly.’

My nerves had been strongly wrought upon, and I could not bear it. I sobbed aloud. ‘ Charlotte, you are very cruel ! ’

‘ Am I, indeed ? ’ said Charlotte. ‘ Can’t you tell me something new ? I trust you may meet with no greater cruelty as you pass through life ; ’ and she left me without another word.

With a great effort I reached my own room. I rang my bell, but I repeated the ring three times before I was attended to. Among those multitudinous bells, and with that army of visitors, the only wonder was that any

person ever was attended to. When a chamber-maid appeared, she lifted up her hands.

‘Good gracious, Miss ! were you on board too ?’

‘No, no ; but I have been out, and am wet.’

‘I should think you are wet, Miss. You look as if you had come out of the sea ! What can I do for you, Miss ? Shall I ask your aunt or sister to come ?’

‘No, no, I want to see Gypsie.’

The girl expostulated, but I would not listen. One look would be enough, but that look I must have, or I could not close my eyes ; and when I was somewhat more presentable, she helped me along the corridor, for I could scarcely stand, and I went into Aunt Gretta’s room, where Gypsie had been taken.

Aunt Gretta was too much occupied in the delightful occupation of nursing to notice me, and Charlotte, who was there too, merely

looked at me as I went in ; but I saw all I wanted to see—Gypsie quietly sleeping, his breathing regular, his face calm, his hair falling about him ; just as I had seen him a dozen times in his own little bed at home. I kissed him, unheeding Aunt Gretta's warning hand, and Charlotte's angry look, and then I stole out of the room to the girl, who waited for me outside.

She hurried me back, and without a word on my part, helped me to undress, and put me into the bed she had warmed for me. Then she went out of the room and soon returned with some hot cordial, which I swallowed as unresistingly as a child. I was only anxious to be alone, and she soon left me.

I lay back on my pillow, every limb aching. The lightnings flashed still before my eyes, and the thunders rolled in my ears ; and around me was the sea—roaring, tossing, foaming ! I saw it again in all its fury ! and I pressed my hand tightly over my eyes to shut out that sight on the shore, that cry

from the crowd, that rush into the sea ! And there came to me again the words, sweet and low, as I had last heard them—‘ Be not afraid, only believe ; ’ and I did believe.

I went down in the morning, feeling stiff and ill. The first person whom I saw in our sitting-room was papa. He looked just as usual. I went up to him and kissed him. ‘ I hope, papa, you are none the worse for last night.’

‘ Not any, thank you, which is a cause of great thankfulness and calls for much gratitude on my part. My danger was unforeseen and unexpected, and from it I have been mercifully delivered ; but I much regret to learn that you voluntarily and unnecessarily exposed yourself to the fury of the elements ; and I fear, from what Charlotte says, that you will have to incur the penalty of your temerity in a fit of illness.’

‘ Of course, you must make the worst of it to papa,’ I broke out, to Charlotte, who was making breakfast with her usual alacrity and

business-like manner, and looking precisely as she always looked. 'You are always trying to get me into trouble, Charlotte.'

'Thank you,' she said, coolly. 'I am sure I might spare myself the pains, as it seems likely you would get yourself into trouble under any circumstances.'

'I wish you would leave me alone, Charlotte ; it is all I ask of you.'

I trembled all over, and was irritable to the last degree : I knew I was.

'Maude !' interrupted papa, severely, 'I much regret to observe your words and manner in speaking to your elder sister. Surely, it is most unbecoming in you to be causing dissension at a time when humility, gratitude, and thankfulness should be the prevailing sentiments of our hearts.'

'I am grateful ; I am thankful,' I said ; 'but why should Charlotte always be allowed to taunt and vex me ?'

'Well !' said Charlotte, 'nice language, I am sure ! Perhaps you will be kind enough

to inform us for our edification what I have said.'

'Your temper and manner at this moment, my child,' said papa, 'bespeak anything but gratitude and thankfulness. Surely, the events of the past evening might have taught even you how unworthy it is to make a quarrel over totally inadequate causes.'

'What quarrel have I made, papa?' I held fast by the table, for I could scarcely stand; my cheeks were burning, my hands deathly cold. I had not wanted to quarrel; I had come into the room very thankful for papa's safety, and anxious to let him see that I was so.

'Oh dear me, no! Maude never quarrels; she has the sweetest temper in the world,' said Charlotte.

'I did not speak to you, Charlotte; I spoke to papa; and I asked what quarrel I had made.'

'And is not your sister to be allowed to speak, Maude? I suppose in such an im-

portant matter as your exculpation, only yourself is to be heard.'

'Papa, you are very unjust to me!'

'Indeed!' said papa. 'It is rather a novel mode of procedure, I must acknowledge, for a daughter to accuse her father of injustice, because he mildly recommends her not to quarrel!'

'You will not see what I mean,' I cried. 'I am always wrong. Do what I will, I get into trouble!'

'It should show you, Maude, how bad must be the temper, and how sinful the habits in which you habitually indulge, if such be the case, when everyone around you is striving for your welfare and anxious to do you good. How often have I warned you, that that untamed will and violent temper of yours will bring you bitter fruit some day, if you do not strive to subdue them; for "where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."'

'Maude is such a martyr!' put in Char-

lotte. 'Nobody suffers like she does ; it is only a wonder how she lives through it all !'

'Should some real trial befall you, Maude,' said papa, 'as unquestionably it must do, before you pass through this "vale of tears," you will then, I trust, be taught to feel how sad is that disposition which I have often pointed out to you, and which is a source not only of great misery to yourself, but, unfortunately, to all with whom you come in contact. The wise man says that "he loveth transgression, that loveth strife."''

'Anything more ?' I said. 'Have you anything more, papa or Charlotte, to say ?'

Papa looked surprised, as well he might. I suppose the devil was in me. 'I have this to say, Maude,' he said, severely, 'that unless you can better control your temper, and act in a more becoming manner to your sister and myself, it will be well for you to retire to your own room until you are in a suitable frame of mind to again mix with the family

circle. "A reproof entereth into a wise man, more than a hundred stripes into a fool."'

I went without a word. Maggie was just coming in at the door as I left. I must have *looked* wicked, for she seemed amazed at my appearance, and exclaimed, 'Good gracious, Maude! what is the matter?' I made no reply, and passed by her.

I suppose I must have walked up and down my room for an hour, until I could endure no longer. I went into Aunt Gretta's room. There Gypsie lay, still fast asleep, looking as if no storm had ever rocked, or wild winds shaken him. It seemed as if good angels had lured him to rest, and were now keeping watch over him. No one else was there. My heart was strangely touched; wild, passionate throbs of love heaved it; bitter, deep spasms of pain moved it; a dark sense of unkindness and injustice weighed it down; a burning sense of shame oppressed it; but I did not shed one tear until Gypsie stirred in his sleep, and, putting out his little

hand, as if feeling for something, murmured, 'Maude, sister Maude.' Then I could bear it no longer, and broke away, for fear my sobs should awake him.

I put on my hat, and slipped out before the visitors were stirring, and went down to where we had stood the night before. There was nothing there to tell me of what had been—nothing but the remembrance in my heart! The rolling waves chased each other on to the beach as merrily as if no white faces had ever looked upon them. But every incident of the previous night was vividly before me. I saw it all again,—and as I saw it, my heart softened, melted, subdued. I trust I was grateful. I hope I was thankful. I believe that the All-merciful saw in that moment that I was not bitter, not harsh, but humble and penitent. I grew calm and quiet; gradually the words which I had heard that morning passed from my recollection, and I listened to others.—'Lo, He bringeth them to the desired haven.' He had done it, and

would He not again? Tossed about, it might be; tempest-driven, with my poor weak heart like an untrue helm, and my passions like so many fierce winds and waves rocking the unsteady bark upon an angry sea;—still, the same Hand would guide me through the breakers, past the rocks, into the ‘desired haven.’

I believed it. My newly-born faith, which had almost been extinguished, revived. I trusted, and was at rest.

Then, when the people began to come out, I left the beach and walked quickly away into the country. I never stopped to think how weary I was. It was three o’clock in the afternoon before I came back to the hotel, and then I felt that I was tired. I dressed carefully for dinner, and lay down on the couch in my bedroom. When the bell rang it needed some resolution to approach the dining-room. Captain Marshall was standing by the entrance, and his exclamation was, ‘Good heavens, Miss Maude! are you ill?’

‘No,’ I said, ‘but I am tired; please don’t take any notice of it;’ and I went in with him to our seats.

Involuntarily my eyes sought Charlotte’s; they always do. What magnetic power is it which attracts me to her? There was just the look on her face which I expected to see.

Captain Marshall was very good. He took no more notice of my looks than every now and then to exclaim, ‘My goodness, Miss Maude! you do look ill!’ and to upbraid himself for having taken me out the night before. All his conversation was about the storm and Gypsie’s deliverance, and he was so fluent that he only needed an assent from me now and then.

But one thing I roused myself to ask, ‘could he tell me who had saved Gypsie?’ No, he could not; he had made every possible enquiry, but he could learn nothing. No one knew. It was some stranger, who in the confusion had slipped away. Dr. Maynard had been busy about the same matter all

the day, but with the same result. With such numbers of visitors in Scarborough, one man might be quite unknown, but Captain Marshall was quite certain no trouble had been spared either by Dr. Maynard or himself.

At last dinner came to an end. I managed to stop Aunt Gretta on the way to the drawing-room, and whisper, 'Aunt Gretta, I don't feel well. If you think I might I should like to go to bed.'

Aunt Gretta was delighted. I do not mean to say delighted that I was poorly, but with my acknowledging it, and appealing to her for help. She would instantly have hurried me to my room, but one thing remained to be done, and I had resolved to do it. Papa always retired to our sitting-room some time after dinner. I made my way to the room. Papa had just gone in. I went up to him and told him I was very sorry I had spoken as I had done that morning, and I hoped he would forgive me, and I would

try not to do it again. Was this the 'royalty of right-doing,' I wonder? I hope it was. He talked to me for a quarter of an hour, and then let me go.

It was well he did; it was with the greatest difficulty I reached my room, and there Aunt Gretta had for once the pleasure of administering as many globules as she chose, and putting me to bed like a baby, and then she consented to leave me alone that I might try and sleep.

Gypsie is quite well, and beside me now. I coaxed him to go to sleep, and then laid him down here. Gypsie always has his dinner in the middle of the day, and I have had it with him to-day, as I was not able to go down-stairs.

CHAPTER XII.

Wednesday, October 13.

WE are going home to-morrow. Aunt Gretta has taken some persuading before she could be induced to let me travel. I feel quite well, and have been wandering about all day with Gypsie, bidding 'good-byes' to our favourite haunts; and the last place we went to was the spot where I stood that night when Gypsie was so nearly drowned; when he would have been, had it not been for—for what?

Gypsie has not a clear recollection of that night. I think the fright must have bewildered him so much that he cannot remember anything distinctly, for he seems only to have a confused consciousness of the

whole matter. Since that night he has become so much dearer to everyone of us, if that be possible, that I feel almost sure nothing will induce papa to send him away to school. Papa has spared neither time nor money to find out who it was who saved his boy, but all in vain.

Saturday, October 16.

We are at home now. Charlotte has been so busy with her village work, and papa with the same, Aunt Gretta with the unpacking and the house, and Maggie with resting after her fatigues, and—when she could get a listener—recounting her flirtations at Scarborough, that Gypsie and I have been left to our own sweet wills. We have distributed all our presents. Gypsie remembered everyone, from Mrs. Carew, our stately housekeeper, to the poor boy whose Sunday dinner he carries every Saturday afternoon.

And to-morrow will be Sunday ! Instead of the clinking jar of those bells at Scar-

borough,—as little in harmony as the clergymen of their different churches,—I shall have the clear, ringing chimes of Stonecross, as sweet as if they were rung by angel-hands, and heard through the open gates of heaven. I shall not have the sound of the sea, but I shall have the low winds murmuring through the woods, the songs of the birds, the perfume of the autumn flowers, and Gypsie's little voice—harmony itself—making all else in concord.

Sunday, October 17.

The church looked just as usual this morning. There were a great many strangers there. There always are, when papa comes back after an absence. And papa himself! He might have been away six hours, instead of six weeks! He looked unchanged in the slightest particular. Mr. Retnor was in the reading-desk in his own particular style of surplice. It is a remarkable fact about Mr. Retnor's surplices, that they never do, by any

exception, look fresh and clean. He must have them 'got up' in the village, I suppose, and yet, I am sure there is not a washerwoman in the place who would not be ashamed to turn out such a piece of work from her laundry. He must crumple them up on purpose to suit his notions before he puts them on; perhaps he thinks it looks more like 'business' to have his surplice soiled. If he were going to be my husband—but then he isn't. And of all things I never dare suggest a word to Charlotte about Mr. Retnor; so he will have to go on wearing his soiled-looking, crumpled surplices, and my eyes will have to go on smarting with beholding them. Perhaps, after all, it is only his awkward way of putting them on. Some people are so essentially crooked by nature, that they involuntarily give a twist even to their outer garments.

Papa preached to a most attentive and large congregation. They had been deprived of his sermons for six weeks, and so were

prepared to value his inestimable discourses more than ever. Little Bobbie did not forget to fall asleep, nor did his kind friend forget to take him upon his knee, in order that his slumbers might not be broken by the cuffs and nips of boys to whose evil hands Satan doubtless extended his benevolent patronage.

I have some very good news to tell ! Dr. Vanny has returned. He dined with us. After being away three months, how delightful it was to see him at our table again ! His health is quite restored.

Both at dinner and dessert the conversation was about that terrible night at Scarborough, and papa expressed again and again his regret that it had been impossible to find out to whom we were so indebted, and Dr. Vanny asked some questions, just in his old queer way ; and Mr. Retnor intimated that if papa had been engaged in preparing sermons, and Gypsie in learning lessons, as they ought to have been, they would never have been thrown into such

danger. Certainly, Mr. Retnor has as much disagreeable presumption as any man I know, and now he has more than ever. He calls me 'Maude' with the greatest possible assurance, as if he had known me from a baby ; and actually, because he is going to be Charlotte's husband, he once offered to kiss me ! Such impertinence ! He shall never do that as long as I have a tongue in my head or fingers on my hands. Mr. Retnor kiss me indeed ! But I will not write about him.

Aunt Gretta was troubled because she was quite sure that whoever it was who had saved Gypsie, he must have taken his death with cold, gone to his lodgings, and died forthwith. 'Of course, we had not been able to hear of him ; how could we, when he had died, and most likely been buried within two days of his death ? Who would look after him in lodgings during the season in Scarborough ?' She even suggested the possibility of his having been buried alive in the

universal hurry of life in such a town, and the advisability of Dr. Vanny's writing to the municipal authorities to state the circumstances and to urge them to institute an enquiry. Dr. Vanny was very testy. It is the one fault of my dear old friend the Dr., that he seems as if he could not 'get on' with Aunt Gretta. If she *could* quarrel, she and Dr. Vanny would have a regular fight of it almost every time he comes to the house ; but Aunt Gretta cannot quarrel.

Charlotte hoped that whoever the 'person' was, he would not, because he had done one good thing, give himself 'airs' for the rest of his natural life ; and Maggie could only shiver at the recollection, wonder if he were a handsome man, an aristocrat or a *bourgeois*, or, more probably, a *parvenu*. Scarborough was full of them.

'Whoever he was, Maggie,' remarked papa, 'he committed the most humane, generous, and self-sacrificing action which one human being could possibly perform for

another. Our thanks and gratitude are equally due to him, were he a duke's son or a peasant. In either case, he is a man made in the image of God, who at first created them, "male and female!" and in His "own likeness." Let us not be too ready to draw invidious distinctions, for He hath "made of one blood all nations of men."

'I am happy to hear such a sentiment from your lips, my worthy friend,' said Dr. Vanny, in a particularly dry tone. 'There is too much of this blue-blood caste now-a-days. We are too ready to snuff at our neighbour's coat, because it is not so black as our own.'

'I beg I may not be misunderstood,' said papa. 'I am the last man'—'I know that,' I heard Dr. Vanny say, under his breath—'the last man,' continued papa, 'to advocate those extreme views, those sentiments of ultra-liberalism, which undoubtedly sap the foundations of society, and overturn those right distinctions which are the safeguard and bulwark of all ranks.'

Such views are pernicious in the extreme, and cannot be too earnestly deprecated. Let us not entertain most remotely those sentiments which, advocated without judgment, are so inimical to our safety as a nation, and our peace as individuals. "Let every man abide in his own calling," were he a prince or a duke who saved Gypsie.'

'If he were either the one or the other,' said Dr. Vanny, 'it was a rash and inconsiderate action of him. He should have waited for a more fitting opportunity to show his heroism, and not put out his hand to save the son of an untitled man, albeit one so rich and influential as Dr. Maynard.'

'You slightly misapprehend my sentiments, Dr. Vanny,' said papa.

'Not at all, my good sir; I have known and understood them quite too long to be in danger of misapprehending them now. My little friend here is very quiet on this matter, eh, Maude? I daresay you felt it enough at the time—too much perhaps?'

‘I should think Maude was likely to feel it,’ said Charlotte, ‘as she added in no small degree to our trouble, by exhibiting her usual want of consideration for others in getting wet to the skin, and then being laid up.’

‘Heigho!’ said the Dr. ‘What is this I hear, Maude? Getting wet to the skin? It is a good thing that Dr. Vanny is back again, I see.’

‘I am sure it is,’ I said, with my whole heart.

‘I very much regret,’ said papa, ‘that Maude has not yet learned to show that proper self-restraint and requisite self-repression which are so indispensable to a due balance of character and to an adequate performance of duty. “The ear that heareth reproof abideth among the wise!”’

‘Tush, tush!’ said Dr. Vanny, irreverently. ‘It was natural enough the child should want to see what was going on, especially if Gypsie were in the case, or in the sea, which means much the same thing.’

‘Plenty of energy you see you have, Maude;’ said Mr. Retnor, ‘if only that energy were rightly directed, and under proper guidance, what a valuable quality you would find it, and what a worker you would become!’

‘I don’t want to become one,’ I said, waspishly. I cannot endure Mr. Retnor calling me ‘Maude,’ in that familiar manner.

‘What is this?’ said Dr. Vanny. ‘My little girl does not want to be a worker? I will never believe that; I know better.’

‘I do; I do want to be one,’ I cried. ‘I did not mean that, I only mean—I meant ——’

‘You appear to be somewhat uncertain as to what you do mean, Maude,’ said papa. ‘I should advise you to be more on your guard against these violent expressions. We are told to be “swift to hear, slow to speak,” and, again, “a wholesome tongue is a tree of life.”’

‘I am sure I shall never cease to wonder

all my life how it was that Maude did not die,' said Aunt Gretta. 'I never knew about it until two days afterwards ; for I was so engaged with Gypsie and my brother that night that I had not any time to look after her at all.'

'That is the very reason why she did not die,' muttered Dr. Vanny.

'Did you speak, Dr. Vanny ?' said Aunt Gretta, politely.

'No, ma'am,' he said, curtly, and I heard him add, 'not to you.'

'I can only look upon it as a special intervention of Providence, in fact, a miracle,' continued Aunt Gretta, 'that I should not have been able to nurse her, and she had not in consequence a dreadful attack of something—brain fever at least.'

'Brain fever does not come on, madam, by getting wet,' said Dr. Vanny, 'and the days of miracles are passed.'

'That is a question which will admit of discussion,' said papa, setting his spectacles further on his nose, and assuming a firmer

attitude in his chair. 'I do not pronounce myself an authority upon such a point; nevertheless, many able and learned divines, nay, men of other professions, hold——'

'Yes, I have no doubt they do,' interrupted Dr. Vanny; 'but if you were out, Maude, you saw something of this matter that night. Did you not see at all who it was who risked his life to save Gypsie?'

A sickly horror had stolen over me the last two minutes. I do not know why I shrank from saying that it was the village school-master. I felt Dr. Vanny would put the question to me. He always had such a way of going straight to the root of a thing. He must be a most dreadful man for anyone to be with who has a secret. Mr. Retnor saved me—most unconsciously, most unknowingly—but he did it; and here I, for the first time in my life, record my everlasting gratitude to him. I thanked him from the bottom of my heart for beginning to give, in his loud, pompous manner, a reply to papa's last obser-

vation, as if he had never heard Dr. Vanny speak at all. I will never hate him again ; I will try to like him ; nay, if he persists, I will even let him kiss me, dreadful though it may be, but I will wash my face well afterwards. ‘ Regarding that question,’ he said, ‘ I cannot see the practical value of it. Generally speaking, no real use comes of arguing abstract questions ; therefore, such a habit may be pronounced a waste of time. Where nothing useful can be gained by discussion, it is so much valuable breath lost.’

‘ I entirely differ from you, sir,’ said papa, warmly.

‘ Of course you do, my dear sir,’ said Dr. Vanny ; ‘ we all know you do. Rectors always entirely differ from their curates, and no one who has the pleasure of knowing you and Mr. Retnor, but will perceive that you form no exception to the general rule. Tell me, Maude, I want to know ; did you not catch a glimpse of this fine young fellow who plunged so heroically into the “foaming deep” after our

Gypsie ? I would lay a bet, that dark though it was, you know as well as possible, if he had curly hair, and what colour his eyes were.'

I knew that it was no use trying to *evade* Dr. Vanny. If he saw I was trying to do that, it would only make him more resolute in finding out what I endeavoured to conceal ; but an appeal to his kindness was never in vain. I felt all the colour leave my face, but to come in a richer glow, and I looked up to him with eyes, which I hoped expressed all I wished.

'Well, well !' he said, 'I see you don't like to think about that night, so we'll say no more about it, but be thankful, as we ought to be ; and mind you never do such a thing again as go and stand for an hour in a drenching storm. Who was with you ?'

'Captain Marshall,' I said.

Dr. Vanny whistled, and arched his eyebrows.

'How could you do such a thing, Maude ?' said Maggie. 'You would not have a thing

on fit to be seen, and I'm sure there wouldn't be a wave left in your hair. I never heard of such a ridiculous thing in all my life !'

'I have heard of a great many more ridiculous things,' said Dr. Vanny ; 'and as for a wave in her hair, Maude would have plenty of waves before her eyes, letting alone her hair ; though I have no doubt, if it comes to that, she had some there too, eh, Maude ? The waves aren't very particular where they go on such a night. But never mind, we'll say no more about it. Sunday-school this afternoon, is it ? Time to be going ? Put on your bonnet then, and I'll walk part of the way with you.'

Very glad I was to get away, and Dr. Vanny said nothing more about it on the way to school.

Charlotte was very busy all the evening with her class, so Gypsie and I took our accustomed walk before it became dusk, and soon found ourselves at the side of Mrs. Morris's grave. There was not a weed or a

stray leaf, or a faded flower to be seen. It had been tended and cared for, better, if possible, than Gypsie and I could have done it. It looked fresh and green as ever, with a very little touch—scarcely perceptible—of autumn on the leaves. I knew who had taken such care of it, and I thanked him in my heart.

Gypsie looked at the grave, and then said, ‘Maude, how nice it looks! Someone, I think, must have made it look so nice.’

Yes, Gypsie was right; someone had made it look nice.

We walked home; we were very happy. I was, and Gypsie always is; and as we went along, the sky began to flush with autumn sunset-hues;—golden, red, crimson; spreading, mingling, deepening; until, in one blaze of glory, the sun looked out, gave one brilliant smile to the earth, and then sank away. Before we reached home a slight coolness was in the air, a tender mist in the valley, and a faint night-breeze had sprung

up to hold sweet twilight talk with autumn flowers.

I had some rebuffs at supper, but they came very lightly. And now, I am sitting by my open window. There is not a sound but the continuous chirp of the corn-crake in the hedge; and just now and then I can catch, as usual, the far-off babble of my brook. I wonder how long I have been sitting here. I love to sit here so quietly. It is peace; it is rest.

It is a very beautiful night. The moonlight floods the earth with glory, and there is a spot I know where—

The marble bright in dark appears,
The mystic glory dies away.

And so I suppose I must think of ‘closing eaves of wearied eyes.’

CHAPTER XIII.

Wednesday, October 20.

THIS morning, when papa came in to dinner, he was two minutes late by my watch, and also by the timepiece, and, as he regulates and winds up that timepiece himself, he *must* have been late !

When dinner was nearly over, he said, ‘ Gypsie, I have something to tell you ; ’ and when he had teased him a little by pretending he would not tell him (papa can both play with, and tease Gypsie), he said, ‘ You are to begin now and work, Gypsie ; I have engaged someone to come and give you lessons.’

Gypsie was all delight and astonishment. I saw in a monent that Charlotte knew all about it. By-and-by, it came out that papa

had engaged Mr. Farren to come up in his spare time three days a week, and teach Gypsie.

‘The village schoolmaster!’ exclaimed Maggie. ‘La papa! you can’t be in earnest.’

‘I am certainly in earnest, Maggie. I always try in my conversation to avoid “foolish talking and jesting which are not convenient.” I am glad that Mr. Farren has agreed to my request. I have been trying for long to form some arrangement for Gypsie. Nothing else has suggested itself to me; so I am obliged to take the best that offers, in fact, the only one. It is only a provisional arrangement. It is imperative that Gypsie have lessons. I will not have a tutor in my house; so we must soon make up our minds to let Gypsie go to school. There is no alternative, but we will put the evil day off a little longer.’

Maggie shrugged her shoulders at papa’s speech, and was silenced, and Charlotte said that she hoped Mr. Farren knew what work meant, and did not expect that he was coming

to teach Gypsie by way of amusement. She should take the opportunity, if she could spare the time, of being in the room for two or three lessons, and seeing that he did what he ought to do.

‘I think it will do very well for the present,’ said Aunt Gretta. ‘I am sure I dread beyond everything Gypsie going to a public school. I don’t believe they ever half air the beds ; and boys are always getting their feet wet, and no one sees after them or puts them in hot water.’

“ ‘Them,’ ” said Charlotte, but she said no more ; and if she had, she would not have been able to vex Aunt Gretta. Aunt Gretta’s grammar is beyond question.

‘I have had a long talk with Mr. Farren,’ continued papa, ‘and, on the whole, I am much pleased with him, although I am at a loss to understand why he should at first have absolutely refused to accede to my request ; I had considerable difficulty in inducing him to agree to it at all.’

‘Really!’ said Charlotte. ‘He has all the manner about him of a man who thinks himself above his position.’

‘I have not observed it,’ said papa. ‘Self-respect is an essential element in any worthy character; it enables a man to go through the duties of life with credit to himself and satisfaction to others. I cannot regret that Mr. Farren has this quality, although it is true that if not kept in check, there is danger of it degenerating into vanity. An undue estimate of his own qualifications is a most undesirable feature in the character of any man, more especially a young man, and one who undertakes to teach others.’

‘What objection, pray, did Mr. Farren state?’ said Charlotte. ‘I hope he is conscious of the great favour you have done him?’

‘Of that I cannot speak with any degree of certainty,’ said papa; ‘nor am I able to give you his reasons for at first refusing to accede to my proposition; he was not partic-

cularly open in stating them, nor did I deem it my affair to endeavour to become acquainted with them. I believe the principal inducement which influenced him to agree to my wish was the statement which I made, that it was the only alternative, but sending Gypsie to school, which step would be productive of great sorrow to each member of the family, particularly at present, when we have scarcely recovered the shock we sustained from our anxiety at Scarborough.'

'Anxiety, indeed!' said Aunt Gretta. 'I shall never forget it, to the end of my life. I have no doubt everyone in the village felt anxious too. To think of such a thing!'

'La, Aunt Gretta!' exclaimed Maggie, 'How could the people know of it a hundred miles off?'

'How silly it is,' said Charlotte, 'to talk of what people felt and suffered! If people would only act instead of feeling!'

'Well, my dear,' said Aunt Gretta, mildly, 'it is given to some to do, and others to feel.'

‘ I wonder what good feeling does ? ’ said Charlotte. ‘ A great deal of good Maude did on the pier that night ; yet I suppose she *felt* —probably both cold and wet.’

‘ Poor dear child, yes,’ said Aunt Gretta, pityingly.

‘ There would be some use in Maude feeling,’ continued Charlotte, ‘ if it would teach her any sense ; but as that seems to be hopeless——’

‘ La, Charlotte ! let her alone,’ said Maggie ; ‘ we have had enough of it. I would talk about something more agreeable. Can’t you talk about Mr. Retnor ? ’

‘ I’ll trouble you to mind your own business,’ said Charlotte ; and Maggie shrank into herself again.

‘ Mr. Farren knew how anxious we had been,’ said papa, when this little sisterly dialogue had passed ; ‘ for he was in Scarborough for a day or two, and heard of it there. His holidays, as you are aware, occurred during our absence. He happened, inad-

vertently this morning, when talking about Gypsie, to say something which led me to infer he had been there, and I asked him. I am a little astonished, as Scarborough is scarcely the place at this time of the year for a man in his position.'

'And the expense of travelling such a distance!' said Charlotte. 'But this class of people is as improvident and careless as the poorest among the labourers; and then in case of sickness or want of work they come on institutions or friends, or the parish. It is perfectly shameful!'

'Charlotte!' I said, but I said no more. Thank Heaven, I said no more! It was enough; it—and the look which I have no doubt accompanied it!

Everyone looked at me. I was a fool to speak; I know I was, but I could bear it no longer.

'Now for a scene,' said Charlotte. 'Maude has such a strange amount of superfluous feeling that the village blacksmith, tailor, and

shoemaker no doubt occupy a position in her favour, as well as the schoolmaster.'

'Undue sympathy with inadequate objects is invariably the mark of an ill-regulated mind,' said papa. 'I have often observed in you, Maude, the desire of exhibiting this diseased state of feeling from no other motive than a wish to appear singular.'

I did not speak. Again I thank Heaven that I did not, and I slipped out as soon as possible and got into the open air.

Through the garden, through the fields, through the lane into the wood! Again I thanked Heaven that I did not speak!

Oh, the sweet silence and breathing fragrance of the autumn woods! A winsome sense of changing beauty rests now on my trees. Beautiful woods! through whose mazy labyrinth of foliage I can look up and see the blue heavens, and still hold my new and weak belief that there is a God, and that He rules on earth, as well as in heaven.

And now, one thing is certain—Mr.

Farren is coming to teach Gypsie. I shall sometimes see him, sometimes speak to him, sometimes—what am I saying? I will write no more; but one thing is certain—Mr. Farren is coming to teach Gypsie.

Sunday, October 24.

To-day, Gypsie and I went as usual to the churchyard. Alas! I am afraid our walks there are coming to an end, for Aunt Gretta happened to see us starting, and the sight put her into great distress. 'To go out when it was growing dark and a fog probably coming on, and autumn, and winter coming soon! She could not let us do such a thing on any account.' And it was only by the utmost entreaty and supplication which I could employ that she gave way; and, seizing the relenting moment, we set off without further let or hindrance; but it will be the last time I must take Gypsie; and as for myself,—well, I must take my chance.

It certainly was growing dark, so we

could not stay long, and as we were crossing the open road which leads through the churchyard we saw Mr. Farren. He comes that way, the path through the churchyard is so much shorter than going round. I am glad it was not too dark for him to recognise us ; I feared at first that he was going to pass. I wanted to speak to him for five minutes, because it is so long since I have seen him, and Gypsie loves him so dearly. He ran to meet Mr. Farren now with great delight, and said, ‘ Mr. Farren, you are coming up to the Hall to teach me ; I am so glad ! I will try and never give you any trouble.’

‘ You never give any trouble, Gypsie,’ he said, after he had wished me ‘ good evening ;’ and he then turned to me and asked how I had enjoyed my stay at Scarborough, and I told him ‘ not at all.’

‘ How is that ?’ he said.

‘ What was there to enjoy ?’ I asked.

‘ Everything, I should think. Society,

friends, pleasures, amusements, and a large share of what must surely please you—the beauties of a beautiful world.’

‘I liked the sea,’ I said; ‘I always do, especially when it is rough and stormy. I liked the beautiful walks when Gypsie and I could go alone, and I liked being out in a boat, especially when there was danger. This is the sum-total of my enjoyment. Everything else I hate. The company, the hotel-life, the Spa, the fashion, the amusements—they are all utter abomination to me.’

‘Even in all these,’ he said, ‘was there nothing that could give you pleasure?’

‘Not a thing,’ I said. ‘I hated the place altogether, and longed to be at home again.’

‘And yet, when you come home, things are equally wearisome and distasteful.’

‘I never said so, Mr. Farren.’

‘Excuse me, you have tacitly admitted it often, and I feel sure that such is the case. Does not the fault, then, lie something deeper than mere scene or society?’

‘Perhaps it does,’ I said. ‘Are you going to lecture me, Mr. Farren?’

‘No, indeed; that is not my province. Mere lecturing would never do you any good, if you would bear it, which you would not.’

‘Indeed, indeed, I would.’ I was going to add ‘from you,’ but I stopped in time. My eyes filled; I could not help it; and it was quite too dusk for Mr. Farren to see that. I am afraid my voice must have faltered a little.

‘Would you?’ he said. ‘I am very glad to hear it. Three months ago I am sure you would not have borne it. It shows you are improved.’

‘I do think, Mr. Farren, that I have improved a little. I am sure I have tried very much whilst I have been in Scarborough.’

‘Then I am quite sure you have succeeded,’ he said, in such a kind tone. ‘No one ever tried earnestly and sincerely without gaining—I will not say success—but certainly some success.’

‘Do you think so?’ I said.

‘I am sure of it. We never patiently and truly work in vain. All you have to do now, having begun, is to go on well; you must not stop half-way. However hard it seems, you must patiently go on until it becomes easy.’

‘Mr. Farren, it will never be easy for me to do right, you do not know ——.’ I did not finish, and he did not seem to notice it.

‘I know,’ he said, ‘I know that it is awfully hard when one feels bitter, to conquer it and become forgiving; but it is possible, and it is a work worth accomplishing. If you only did this one thing well, your life would not have been an idle one, for this is the hardest work you could have. You would have an object in life,—to give of your very best, what costs you the most—unto God; not maimed and imperfect gifts, but that which is hard to obtain, and which costs many a dearly-bought battle before it is obtained. These are not imaginary foes,

but real, living, actual ones ; fiends, which wrestle for your soul ; devils, which would tear from you your rightful possessions. You must conquer them, or they will conquer you.'

We had just come to the turn where his road branches off from ours, and he said, 'You must walk as quickly as you can ; it is getting dark, so I will go with you, and take care of Gypsie.'

I am very glad of two things. One is, that Mr. Farren always says that I *am* to do a thing—does not ask me, if I will ; and another, that when talking to me—I don't know how, but in some strange way—he seems to understand just what it is I want and to use the right words to express it ; strong words, I mean ; words which seem to take hold of my need. It seems to me that in the three or four times I have talked to him, I have gained more help than in the whole course of my life before.

We went along together. How pleasant

it was ! Gypsie, holding fast by Mr. Farren's hand, and I on the other side. I did not want to talk ; it seemed so much rest, and promise of security to be by him. I felt he quite understood me, and instead of trampling me down—down, he was willing to put out his hand and lift me up, until—until I had at least, like the man whom papa read about last Sunday morning, escaped from the possession of the Legion which had many a time rent and torn him.

The turn at the end of the lane brought us in view of the Hall gates, and I knew we should be at home directly. I said, ' Mr. Farren, have you been away during your holidays ? '

' Yes,' he said.

' At Scarborough ? '

' I have spent the most of the time at——, a little village in Hampshire.'

' But were you not in Scarborough at all ? '

' I did run over for a day or two, once or twice.'

‘Once or twice,’ I repeated.

Mr. Farren quickened his footsteps, and began talking to Gypsie. ‘Gypsie, will you like lessons? Tell me, what would you wish the most to learn?’

‘Mr. Farren,’ I interrupted, ‘have you heard what a dreadful trouble we had about Gypsie and papa at Scarborough?’

‘A dreadful trouble?’ he repeated. ‘No, I have not heard about it.’

‘Not about their going to Burlington, and a storm coming on as they returned? We thought they would all have been drowned, and that the packet would never get in safely. They had to come in in the life-boat, and just as they were coming on shore, a huge wave washed—oh, it is too dreadful to talk about, even now. Did you hear nothing of all this, Mr. Farren?’

‘I did hear some tale, but these kind of things are usually so exaggerated, that it is well not to believe all you hear.’

‘But this was quite true! No exaggera-

tion could exceed the reality. I have never witnessed such a dreadful storm before.'

'Perhaps you have never witnessed one at all,' he said, coolly. 'Storms usually are dreadful if they are worth the name, and it is probable that the first one you witnessed would seem to you very terrific, though it might be nothing more than an unusual easterly wind.'

If anyone else had made such a speech to me! Just as if I were a baby, and didn't know what a storm meant! I ought to, after having stood an hour on that pier.

'This *was* a storm,' I said, 'and a very terrible one. I am not speaking without knowing what I am talking about; and it was a time of wretched anxiety and fearful suspense to me.'

'I am sorry for that,' he said, gently.'

'Have you heard nothing about it, Mr. Farren?' I said.

'I did hear something,' he said; 'I fancy from Dr. Maynard, when he was talking to

me the other morning, but I understood that it was something to be thankful for, not a "dreadful trouble."

'It was a dreadful trouble while it lasted,' I said. 'Of course we were thankful that they were saved.'

'Then I would try to think more of what you have to be thankful for than of the "dreadful trouble."'

'The very thing,' I said, 'about which I both want to think and talk. It was of Gypsie's deliverance I wished to speak to you, Mr. Farren.'

I think he had not expected that I should reply in that way to him.

'Mr. Farren,' I said, 'do you know the particulars of that night? I mean about Gypsie being rescued?'

'No one has told me any particulars,' he said. 'If Gypsie were saved from a sudden death, everyone who loves him has great cause for thankfulness, and for a firmer belief that the God who saved him is essentially a

God of love—not of harshness. You are just at home, so I must wish you, “Good-night.”’

‘You must stay a moment, please ! I do want to speak to you !’

‘I shall be very happy,’ he said ; ‘but you must excuse me again reminding you that it is growing late, and is now nearly dark.’

‘I want to speak to you,’ I repeated. ‘Mr. Farren, someone plunged into the foaming sea, and at the imminent risk of his own life, saved Gypsie.’

He laughed. ‘Pardon me ! but “foaming sea,” and “imminent risk,” are large terms, and would figure well on the pages of a three-volume novel. Has not your excited imagination supplied a great deal, and invested an ordinary occurrence with something of the hues of romance ?’

‘It was not an ordinary occurrence ; it was a moment of frightful horror ! Gypsie would have been lost without the shadow of a doubt, but for the exertions of this stranger.

It was more than "imminent peril"—it was a miracle that his life was spared; *their* lives, I should say—Gypsie's and his deliverer's.'

I was not out of temper; I spoke quite calmly.

'A miracle pre-supposes the existence and power of a Divine Being,' he said. 'I am glad that Miss Maynard has cast away what she once allowed herself to hold—a disbelief in God.'

'I cast it away that night, for ever,' I said, 'I did indeed, Mr. Farren! I will never disbelieve again—never!'

'Say you will try not. You do not know what crises your weak faith may have to pass through; you do not know by what depths of doubt and fear and anguish you may be assailed; you do not know what is before you.'

'Mr. Farren, there can be no greater grief to me in the world than to lose Gypsie. I thought I had lost him that night. God gave him back to me. I will never doubt again!'

‘God grant it!’ he said. ‘But you do not know! To hold fast your belief in God through all the anguish of life is heaven; to lose faith in Him is hell!—hell in your heart, and the near step to hell in reality. You have reason to look back upon that night with gratitude for more reasons than one.’

‘I have indeed,’ I said; ‘but, I want to ask you a question.’

‘It must be some other time, then,’ he said. ‘I cannot allow myself to keep you another moment. Good-night, Miss Maynard,’ and he lifted his hat.

‘Allow me, at least, if you will not hear what I have to say, allow me to thank you.’

‘For having taken care of Mrs. Morris’s grave during your absence,’ he said, quickly. ‘It was a pleasure to me to do it; I am glad you have a pleasure in finding it done. Good-night.’

And he left me. I do not care. I know it, and he knows I do! I am very happy.

CHAPTER XIV.

Wednesday, November 4.

GYPsIE is getting on famously with his lessons. Mr. Farren comes three times a week; and how Gypsie does enjoy those hours! Charlotte kept her word, and was in the room during the first week, but I conclude that either she was satisfied that Mr. Farren did his work well, or she did not much like her occupation, for she has not been in since.

Mr. Farren comes from twelve o'clock until two, and he and Gypsie have the library, and Aunt Gretta sits there with her knitting, as guard, to see that no evil beast devours them, and sometimes I sit with her. Gypsie is almost always with me, so it is the most

natural thing in the world for me to be there when he is having his lessons. It is pleasant, it is *very* pleasant.

I cannot remember anything very pleasant about my own lessons. I don't think they were very interesting. Perhaps it was my own fault. I could not bear to do things at the regular times, and certain things at stated hours. Our governess was the very soul of order and method; at the right hour and right minute a thing must be done. I used to feel as if I were in the stocks, or if something which I could not break were binding me fast. If she would have let me study what I felt inclined to at the moment, I do think I could have done better; but I suppose that would never have done. And then to be fastened up in the school-room, until the exact hour of releasing, no matter what state I was in, or what state the beautiful world outside was in! When the sun shone so gloriously on the fields, and the wind ran hither and thither, and played such merry games with the trees

in my wood, and the brook kept calling loudly to me to come out and wade in it, and the wood-doves repeated the call, and the trees took it up, and beckoned me too! It really did sometimes seem very hard. I am certain that I could have learnt infinitely more alone with Nature, my own dear teacher, whom I love, than I could by the hardest work in the school-room; but Miss Masters did not understand that at all.

However, I did not begin to write about myself, but about Gypsie. He does not seem ever to have hard lessons to learn, and puzzle his dear little active brains over. Mr. Farren will read, and then talk to him upon some subject opened out by the reading, one thing leading on to another. I love to listen to all that he tells Gypsie. Sometimes about the grand old men of old—Roman warriors and Grecian heroes; Egypt's haughty kings and philosophers; Hebrew sages, and Christian martyrs; poor, dark heathen, who cherished their little ray of light until they awoke and found

themselves in the full blaze. Gypsie's blue eyes kindle and his face lights up with enthusiasm—perhaps inspiration, and I can see his little heart is bracing itself up—

To blend his soul's sublimest needs,
With tasks of every day.

And I am sure that even now—

Great thoughts, great feelings come to him,
Like instincts, unawares.

No wonder : Mr. Farren talks about these men in such a graphic way ; not as if they had lived and died two thousand years ago, but just as if he had seen them and talked to them himself, and learnt their trials and discouragements. And then, coming to later times, he tells the history of his own country with a vividness and reality which makes it like a tale to Gypsie ; and when he takes him over battle-fields, and pictures them with a power, which makes one fancy one sees the whole scene, I have heard Gypsie exclaim as if he stood on the spot. Mr. Farren always

finishes when he sees Gypsie getting too excited.

And then how he reads poetry! until Gypsie catches his very tone and cadence and repeats *his* pieces with an emphasis and appreciation which would do credit to an Oxford man, reciting his prize poem. I hope Gypsie will stand some day in that theatre, and electrify the audience, and be deafened by the thunders of applause. I know whom he will have to thank, if ever that occur!

Some days Mr. Farren will take Gypsie's hand, and they will go into the garden and learn there. Sometimes it is a flower dissected, sometimes it is an insect, sometimes it is the flecked cloud, careering in wild fantastic shape. But I cannot describe the 'teachings manifold' which Mr. Farren draws from one thing or another. Gypsie may well count these hours his happiest, and wait impatiently for their return. No wonder that all the work which Mr. Farren leaves for him to do between the lessons is done as soon

and as well as it can be done. I always help Gypsie with this work ; I like to hear Mr. Farren say how well and neatly it is done.

I did not mean to write all this, but it is in my heart. I am glad for Gypsie's sake, and I am glad that my life is so much happier. Charlotte is so very much engaged that she really has not time to scold me as usual, and she lets me do a little sewing for her. It is true that it is not very interesting work—long seams and hems, which I cannot see why Reynolds or Baines, or the sewing-woman, who has been here for a month, and will remain until after the wedding, could not do quite as well. But then, perhaps Charlotte thinks that it will keep me out of mischief ; and when I asked her, she said I might as well be doing something useful as doing nothing. I hate and abominate plain sewing, but I am really trying to put my very best work into this, for I want to give her what has cost me something, and then I think I shall feel better towards her ; besides,

is it wrong to think it about such a little thing? Mr. Farren once said something about giving God the very best, even in little things; not the 'maimed and halt and imperfect;' therefore, I shall put my very best work into this plain sewing.

Saturday, November 21.

Charlotte's marriage is to be on Christmas-day; and how soon that will be here! It will be like a mountain weight off my heart to feel that she is not in the house! Mr. Retnor has taken the large stone house with the pretty garden round it; it is not ten minutes' walk from the Hall. It has such lovely views from the windows! Aunt Gretta, let me go over it with her the other day when Charlotte was at C——, buying dresses.

I rambled over the house, and one room I went into had a pleasant bay-window looking towards the village, and I could see from it the schools and the school-house very plainly. A building—half in the style of a Swiss chalet,

and half of an English house, rather a mixture, blending the picturesqueness of the one with the comfort of the other. I wonder if Mr. Farren feels it *home*; I wonder——. There were large bunches of crimson berries shining out and flecking the white of the walls with a brilliant relief. All the summer flowers which ran over it are gone; only some of the hardier plants on the balcony survive. I am not sure that it does not look prettier now than it did in its summer dress.

Aunt Gretta was so happy going over the house, measuring, arranging, fitting, calculating, that she left me a very long time to my reflections in the bow-window, and I was glad she did. It seemed to me that I had not been half long enough when she called me to go. I hope Charlotte will sometimes wish me to come to her house. I should like now and then to stand in that bay-window and look at the view.

CHAPTER XV.

Wednesday, December 9.

I COULD not help it, I could not! I did get into a passion, I know I did! It is the old tale, perhaps, it *was* all my fault; it might be; I do not know, but I know that it breaks my heart. Day after day, it is the constant striving, and always failing—always hoping for, and never having! Try as I will, it always comes to the same thing! Oh, it is hard, hard! Never a little help, a little word of kindness; never a hand put out a little way to aid. All day long I have been trying to do right, and all day long I have utterly failed. I will not write about it, I am blinded with tears, I am——.

I cannot think what is the matter with

me. I think I never felt so weak in my life ; even Gypsie's love is more sometimes than I can bear, and a word of kindness from any one else makes me sob like a baby.

Monday, December 21.

On Saturday, I went to see poor Betsy Colder. She has been much worse lately, and I have not been to see her for a month. I could not go. The last time I went to see one of my old women, she looked at me through her spectacles for a long time, took them off, wiped them, and exclaimed, ' Miss Maude, honey ! how bad yer do look, to be sure ! Poor child ! what's the matter wi' yer ? ' After that, I resolved I would not go until I felt stronger. When will that be, I wonder ?

Perhaps if I were to go from home I should be better. This morning there was a letter from Aunt Louise—mamma's own sister. She and uncle have returned to England for a time and have taken a house

at Banton, and Aunt Louise wrote to ask if papa would let me go and stay with her. How I wish he would ! But I am afraid there is no chance. I have never paid a long visit alone, and I do not think papa will let me. Aunt Louise cannot come to Stonecross, for her husband is a great invalid ; but she begs that I may go to her, after the wedding is over.

But I was saying that I went yesterday to see old Betsy. I could not bear the old creature to die without making an effort to see her, and she has sent three times to ask me to go.

I met Dr. Vanny, and he walked with me part of the way. He did me a deal of good ; he always does when we are alone. But he had to leave me, and I walked on alone.

Poor Betsy was so pleased to see me, that I was glad I had made the effort to go. I got through my visit with a great effort, and was very thankful to get into the open air again.

It was four o'clock when I left, and growing dusk—a still, quiet, December day; a day when the sun had never appeared; a day of oppression, when Nature seemed struggling with some hidden weight; a day when all that was striving, upward, progressive, seemed checked and kept back. The earth wore a face of patient, quiet calm; an expression of endurance and submission.

I was glad that it was growing dusk; I was glad to be out alone; I was glad the sun had not shone that day; I was glad that Nature seemed as if she had to be still, and wait and hope. Her mood suited well with my own; I coloured all her features with my own feelings. Was it weak, was it wrong, was it cowardly, that hot tears fell as I walked along? They fell on the hard earth; they blurred the dim view; they blinded my eyes, and my steps were uneven and unsteady. I was thankful, for—

The eyes which cannot weep,
Are the saddest eyes of all.

I remembered that spring would follow December days; *they* must pass away, and warmth would come after the cold. Perhaps from where my hot tears fell, flowers of beauty and promise might spring.

I heard someone behind me, after I had left Betsy's cottage at Longfarm about ten minutes. I thought I knew the step, and I hoped he would pass me without recognition. I turned my head on one side that he might, but he must have known me before he came up, for he stopped as soon as he reached me and said, 'Good afternoon, Miss Maude.'

I am glad that he called me 'Miss Maude;' it was almost the first time; until now, he has generally said, 'Miss Maynard.'

'I have a holiday this afternoon, as you will know,' he said, and he seemed to be speaking without looking at me.

I had not known it, and I was obliged to say so. He did not seem surprised. He went on: 'I have been to Longfarm and

Sandrem, making arrangements in connection with the schools for the twenty-fifth.'

'Indeed!' I said.

'It was Dr. Maynard's wish that I should undertake this matter. It is pleasant to see how the children are looking forward to their treat.'

'Indeed!' I said again. I had nothing else to say, for I had not been told of any of the arrangements, and all I longed for was, that he should not know that I had been crying. He went on, as if he did not notice my short replies.

'Yes, it is very pleasant to be in a position which enables you to give pleasure to others. I should think that is one of the things which must greatly add to the happiness of your sister and Mr. Retnor. The twenty-fifth will be a day of rejoicing in all the three villages. It is a pleasant way of celebrating such an event, is it not?'

'Yes,' I said.

'I have always had peculiarly warm

feelings about the observance of Christmas-day and Christmas-eve,' he went on, 'and could never sympathise with the people who do not look upon it as in any way to be distinguished from other days. I should like the happiest associations of my life to linger about Christmas-day. I should like every feeling of unkindness, if I had any, to have their death-blow on that day. I should like any event which gave me happiness to take place on that day. I should like to die on that day, after having worked as long as I could work, and done all I could do.'

'Do you think as much of work as Mr. Retnor and Charlotte?' I said, trying to smile.

'I never think about what they think,' he said, quickly. 'I remember the time when I had a great aversion to work—as great an aversion as I have now an unconquerable desire. Restlessness may in part produce this; I do not know; but I can say now, "Trust in yourself, and you have begun to

live." Still, the time is not far distant when I shrank with the maudlin nervousness of untried power and untested strength from work ; when the very thought of it jarred me, and the anticipation of it fatigued me. I thank God for it now, as one of the greatest helps to bear unavoidable suffering, and as the best cure for that which is curable.'

'Yes,' I said, not knowing what else to say.

'My parents, Miss Maude,' he went on, 'were uneducated, poor people, and the hopes of them both centred in me, whom they unfortunately thought a prodigy, and I was taught to think so too. I was petted and spoiled. I was taught that I was born to make myself a name, to amass wealth, to become one of the learned men of the earth. I grew up to believe it. I was wilful, capricious, selfish, irritable, and discontented. (He never was, I am sure ! How could he say what was not true ?) I thought I was a genius—a child of talent and power ; one

not fitted for mean or common work, one on whom fortune would one day lavish her treasures. And so I lived through my youth, with everything provided for me that the hardly-earned money of my parents could find. I entered upon my manhood to awaken from my dream and meet the realities of life. Instead of being wealthy, I was poor ; instead of being courted and flattered, I was neglected and obscure ; instead of having a great name, I was ignoble and unknown. At twenty-one I was a man without a shilling in the world, and with an old mother dependent on me. Six years have passed since then—years, first of bitterness, anger, and desperation ; then of sin, sullenness, and despair ; then of subdued pain, and listless striving ; then of better striving, resolute endurance, rigorous duty and strongly-subdued aspirations, and—of peace. At twenty-seven I find myself an insignificant village schoolmaster, wholly dependent upon health and work for main-

tenance ; without a near relation, without a name in the world ; and I have no prospect of ever being anything else. I once dreamed of being distinguished ; *that* was the dream, *this* is the reality. And yet, after all, I find life worth living, if I can do my duty. It was not marked out in my plan of life that I should live and enjoy as others ; but such as that plan is I have fulfilled it. There is the point. No matter how I came off at the end—vanquished or victor, crowned or conquered—I have done my work : done it, with all my power of doing ; and though it may have been with pain and failure, still it shall stand.'

' But you are so good,' I said, ' you are a Christian.'

' So far from being good,' he said, ' to use your phraseology, I am so " bad," that whether I am a Christian or not, even I do not know myself. I have times of doubt and difficulty, of temptation and anguish and bitterness, such, as I pray God, you may never know! I find life a tremendous battle,

infinitely small as my battle-field is. I find myself a ceaseless foe to myself. I find that memories of the past, weariness of the present, shrinking from the future, combine to mar my content night and day. I find that I am bitter, envious, unjust. I find myself murmuring against God and man. But through all I try, and will try, to do my best, both as to enduring and working. And I encourage the hope that to all things there is an end, and I seize and hold fast the fact, that though I am groping in darkness, there is light somewhere, and it is possible that I may one day be in it.'

He had roused me from myself ; he had taken hold of me and dragged me out of my despair. His step, his manner, his voice, his bearing, arrested me. My tears were stopped. Some of the December mist had cleared away in the distance ; I saw the lights of the village ; friendly eyes they seemed—looking upon us out of the darkness, which was gathering fast. I quickened my steps to

keep up with Mr. Farren, who had walked more rapidly, as it seemed to me, unconsciously keeping pace with the vehement manner in which he spoke. Why had he talked in such a manner to me? Never before had he told me anything about himself. I wished he would go on; I did not want one precious moment to pass without his speaking.

When he next spoke his manner was utterly changed. In the calmest and most ordinary tone, he began as if he had never broken off from the subject of Charlotte's wedding—'The children are to have tea at five in the largest school-room, which is to be beautifully decorated for the occasion. All the people are to have dinner—a Christmas dinner. Three dozen of the children—a dozen from each village—are to be suitably dressed, and strew flowers in the path of the bride. Every old woman in each village is to have a pound of tea and a new dress. A committee is formed to make and carry out

arrangements. Dr. Maynard wishes every one to have a treat. It is his doing. I respect him for it, and I am sure you must all be very glad that so much pleasure will be given.'

I assented. I had known nothing of all this until he told me. 'I hope it will be a fine day,' he went on; 'sunshine outwardly and inwardly is what will make everything pass off well—even vexations and annoyances, which, I take it, are a component part of every day's work. I think the children will behave well and be orderly; I will answer for those from Stonecross, as they will be upon their honour; and, such being the case, I do not doubt they will do exactly what they ought to do.

'You will not be here?' I said.

'I shall not be here.'

I did not say anything more; the pang was so bitter, the pain so cruel, the disappointment so great. I was a fool, I am a fool; I know it! If I might but lie down and

die! If the Bible be true, I should then ——
What am I saying? I *know* it is true,
because Mr. Farren believes it, and it says
something about the 'weary being at rest.'
I am weary; will it be very long before I
am at 'rest'?

He said nothing for a few minutes, and
then he spoke in a very gentle tone—'I
have but one human being in the world who
holds the claim of relationship upon me, and
that one is old and poor—an aunt. Since I
have honestly tried to find out if there were
any work in the world left for a disappointed
man to do, I have found out that it makes
her very happy for me to go and see her and
take her a Christmas gift, so I do it.'

'Papa will not be pleased.'

'Will he not? I regret that, though I
see no reason for such being the case. I
have a belief that the season of Christmas
belongs to the poorest man in England for
his very own. You forget that it will be my
holiday.'

‘No, I did not forget ; but Papa will think it shows a want of respect.’

‘I am not answerable for what Dr. Maynard may think.’

‘No ; but you do not wish to displease him.’

‘I do not wish it ; I should not put myself out of the way to cause it. If the plans and habits of my life should happen to do it, it will not give me a moment’s concern, providing I entirely perform my duty to him.’

How firm his tread was, how upright his mien, how ringing his voice ! Poor and unknown, he was in thralldom to no man ; he walked the earth free, while I—I——

No other word passed. I could not see the lights now. The December fog settled thick and damp upon the earth. I could not see a star in the sky, and I had seen them coyly looking down before. I could not see my way ; I stumbled over stones and roughness, my eyes were very dim.

We were at the garden-gate in five

minutes more. In those five minutes I resolved—God helping me—I would never speak to Mr. Farren again—never, never ! I think I was more than weak—I was mad—going so. I must have been, else why did I one moment resolve this, and breathe in that moment freely and firmly, and the next—the very next——. He had taken my hand to say ‘Good-bye,’ and I—I could not help it—it came—it would come—I said, ‘Mr Farren, do not go, be here on Christmas-day ; stay, I ask you ;’ and he only said, ‘I will stay,’ and I was alone.

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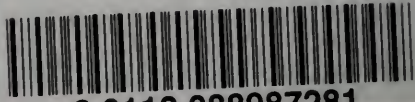
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